

WOMEN'S BEST PRACTICES IN AFRICA

Linking HIV/AIDS to women's peace advocacy



Femmes Africa Solidarité

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Phone : 5531518 / 5525372

e-mail:sochara@vsnl.com

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This publication is one of a series highlighting women's best practices in peace-building in Africa. The information was gathered during a FAS/UNAIDS workshop in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in April 2000. It will provide the basis for a manual on HIV/AIDS advocacy for use in the field. The publication was made possible thanks to contributions from the OAU Peace Fund, UNDP and UNAIDS.

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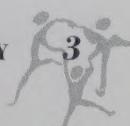
FAS mission statement

Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) is a women's non-governmental organisation (NGO) working for peace in Africa. Since its inception in 1996, FAS has been working to foster, strengthen and promote the leading role of women in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts on the African continent. It does so through advocacy to bring women's concerns to the attention of national, regional and international bodies, and through the implementation of tangible programmes to enhance African women's capacities to assume and maintain their role in leadership and decision-making, especially in the spheres of conflict resolution and peace-building.

FAS has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and observer status with the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). It is also represented in the African Women Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD), the mechanism created by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to bring women's voices into the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa.

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Preface

In my capacity as member of the Advisory Board of Femmes Africa Solidarité and Vice Chairperson of the African Women Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD), I am glad to chair this FAS Workshop on "Linking HIV/AIDS to Women's Peace Advocacy," which is taking place at the OAU headquarters, in this beautiful city of Addis Ababa.

The Beijing process has shown how women of Africa have been mobilising to fight against war and struggling for their voices to be heard. They have demonstrated their commitment to participate as leaders at community level as well as at other levels in the decision-making bodies concerning peace and development.

Myself as a rural woman, an activist, a leader, I have led the fight against violence against women perpetrated during war time. I have been advocating against the enrolment of children in war, as well for their reintegration in family and society, and I have conducted a battle to stop the proliferation of small arms which are killing thousands of civilians in the ECOWAS States.

Despite all our efforts, all these goals have not been achieved. And yet we have another struggle against a disease which killed more than 2.2 million Africans in 1998 alone; in the year 2000, 55% of all HIV infections are in women, according to UNAIDS. This disease is diminishing all the continent's efforts to bring about a lasting peace and sustainable

development in the region.

I must congratulate the OAU and its Secretary-General, Dr Salim Ahmed Salim, a leader who has a vision for his continent. I will recall when I led a delegation on a solidarity mission organised by FAS to Burundi in December 1997 — a country facing a violent ethnic conflict, which was going through an embargo imposed by the neighbouring countries. That delicate mission was supported only by this organisation and its Secretary-General. Thanks to the efforts of Burundian women and men and the particular efforts like the OAU one, this conflict is seeing an end, and if Burundi becomes a success story it will be the first OAU success story.

I should salute the efforts of the ECA, which dedicated its 40th anniversary to celebrating the women of Africa. This was an opportunity for its Executive Secretary, Dr K.Y. Amoako, and Dr Salim Ahmed Salim to create the powerful AWCPD. As the Vice-Chairperson of AWCPD, which acts as an advisory body to the Chief Executives of the OAU and ECA, I am here today to appeal to them to pull their efforts together and strategically address the issue of HIV in Africa, and to draw the attention of the leaders of Africa to the need to rapidly mobilise around the issue of HIV/AIDS and its prevention, and to support those who have been affected.

I congratulate our organisation, FAS, for taking this challenge on board. The General



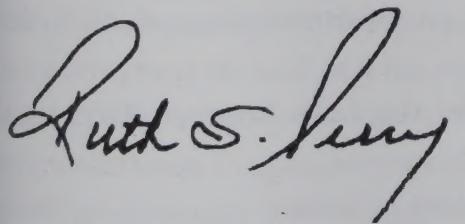
H.E. Mrs Ruth Sando Perry with Members of FAS at the Workshop.

Assembly, which I also chaired prior to this meeting, confirmed the determination of all the members to embark on the same boat to teach to our children, our husbands, our family, our community, the values of peace, tolerance and non-violent means to resolve conflict.

Let me express FAS's deep appreciation to UNAIDS, our partner in this Workshop. Their efforts to build strong partnerships with regional bodies, NGOs and women's organisations to combat HIV in Africa have to be recognised. Let me also say that without the support of UNAIDS, the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, OAU and ECA, this Workshop

could not have taken place.

And to my sisters here from FAS, my message is that we will have to mobilise more and more and get more women and men involved in our advocacy for change. Because of ignorance as well as men's brutality, there are so many beliefs, behaviours and attitudes in our society that we should give priority to changing... What is certain is that having sex with a virgin girl is NOT a cure for AIDS. This is a commonly held but totally false belief; such a practice only serves to accelerate the spread of the virus.



**H.E. Mrs Ruth Sando Perry,
Member of the FAS Advisory Board and Vice Chairperson, AWCPD**



Executive summary

Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) organised a workshop on the theme "Linking AIDS to Women's Peace Advocacy" from 3 to 7 April 2000. The workshop was held thanks to the support of UNAIDS, the OAU, the ECA and l'Organisation internationale de la francophonie. It took place at the OAU Conflict Management Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It drew together women from Africa to consider the issues of gender and HIV/AIDS in peace advocacy on the continent.

The participants present at the workshop came from the following countries: Burundi, Central African Republic, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritius, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Togo and Zambia.

The following organisations were present: OAU, ECA, UNAIDS, UN Political Department, New York, AWCPD, IOM, UNHCR, the International Organisation of the Francophonie, USAID, UNESCO, ACCORD, Africa Leadership Forum, Inter Africa Group and representatives of the diplomatic corps.

All the participants unanimously congratulated FAS for integrating the HIV/AIDS issue into its two year planned programme of activities.

The objectives of the Workshop were as follows:

- to enable participants to address issues relating to HIV/AIDS in its work on conflict resolution and peace process;

- to enable participants to disseminate this knowledge in their work and in their respective organisations and countries;
- to assist FAS to advocate for the inclusion of issues related to gender and HIV/AIDS into the policies of sub-regional and regional bodies;
- to sensitise the African Women's Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD) on issues of HIV/AIDS and through its members, disseminate the knowledge to their home countries at the highest level, as well as regional institutions such as the OAU, ECA, ADB, ECOWAS, IGAD;
- to sensitise women's organisations who will channel the knowledge to the local and national levels;
- to develop a module for training on HIV and other related issues as an advocacy tool for women's NGOs.

The strategy adopted was to review FAS advocacy work in peace at the national, sub-regional, regional and international levels and together with UNAIDS, find entry points to address HIV issues.

The participants expected to achieve the following outcome:

- Develop an understanding of AIDS in Africa;
- Understand the links between AIDS and conflict;
- Develop plans of action;
- Build strategic alliances and partnerships.

The South African case study was used to

introduce participants to the negotiation process and the role that women could play in that process. The historical role of women and their mobilisation was emphasised.

Elements that could serve as lessons for the relationship between gender and HIV/AIDS with peace advocacy were developed. Such elements include:

- Women as victims of sexual violence
- Constraints of reporting sexually violent acts (shame, guilt, fear of re-living experiences in public)
- Stigma attached to sexual abuse of women and its biological consequences
- Effects of displacement of the population on the society
- Social attitudes - lack of recognition of rape as a crime

The impact that conflict situations have on the spread of the virus were elaborated on by the participants and the linkage between gender and HIV/AIDS in conflict situations became crystal clear given the vulnerability that women face in this epidemic.

Participants had the opportunity to look into the regional and sub-regional peace mechanisms. Mr Sam Ibok, the Head of Conflict Management Unit of the OAU gave a clear idea on the role of OAU peace mechanism and the role of civil societies, and particularly women, to implement the decisions taken by the leaders. He declared that he was going to challenge the workshop by sharing the constraints faced by OAU in dealing with conflicts.

Mr Ibok explained that the root causes for conflict on the continent are very clear and include lack of democracy, lack of accountability, bad leadership, lack of good governance and corruption. He said that the real objective should be to translate the talk of conferences and workshops to concrete, specific and targeted programmes that strengthen civil societies on the ground.

Ms Josephine Ouedraogo, Director of the

African Centre for Women at the ECA, also addressed the participants on the role of regional development mechanisms as a framework for consultation with civil society and women's groups. She shared the outcome of the African evaluation of Beijing + 5 with the participants.

Professor Johnson and Dr Maboreke of the ESCAS Department in the OAU gave highlights of their specific programmes on Gender, Health, Refugees and other women security issues.

Ms Julienne Ondziel, Special Rapporteur for women's rights in the ACHPR, addressed the participants on the Commission, where women from war torn countries could denounce impunity and promote respect for Human Rights. While she informed the participants of the additional protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Mrs Shirin Aumeeruddy-Cziffra talked of the optional protocol to the convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Mrs Hiroute Guebre Selassie, representative of the African Women Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD), informed the workshop of the role of this mechanism created by the OAU and the ECA to enhance the voice of African women in the continent's peace and development process.

In working groups, the participants discussed at length the strategies to deal with AIDS in conflict situations. Messages for peace advocacy to integrate AIDS issues were also developed.

Concerning the way forward, it was agreed that at the national level women leaders, especially FAS members, and women's organisations should:

- link up with the grass-roots, especially with the refugees, to ensure the undertaking on HIV issues as well as the linkages between gender, HIV and conflict.

- advocate their governments to intensify the programme to combat AIDS and put the correct legal instruments in place to support such programmes.

At the regional level, it was agreed that FAS will work with organisations such as the AWCPD, OAU, ECA, ADB, ECOWAS, SADC and IGAD to integrate AIDS into policies and programmes in conflict prevention, management and resolution.

It was also agreed that FAS would network with other NGOs in implementing the decisions taken by these bodies.

At the international level FAS will work with UN agencies such as UNAIDS, UNHCR, UNDP, UNIFEM, UNFPA to prioritise HIV/AIDS programmes focused on gender in Africa.

FAS will seek participants to implement the programmes set up by these organisations on HIV/AIDS in conflict situations

FAS will also seek the assistance and collaboration of partners like the Francophonie and Commonwealth to ensure effective implementation of these programmes.

Finally, the evaluation made by the

participants showed that this workshop had met its objective and that the organisers are in line with the broader vision and strategic directions of FAS.

In her closing remarks, Mrs Margaret Vogt, Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs at the United Nations Department of Political Affairs, who attended the workshop, made a significant contribution to the way forward and strategies to be put in place.

The participants shared the outcome of the meeting with the OAU Secretary-General, Dr Salim Ahmed Salim, as women's contribution to the OAU agenda for peace and development.

Dr Salim Ahmed Salim, in his closing speech, thanked the participants and reassured them of his support. He then reiterated the OAU's commitment to address in priority the specific issue of HIV/AIDS.

This publication highlights the discussion and outcome of the meeting in Addis Ababa and provides the basic elements for women's groups to develop their strategies on the issue of HIV/AIDS and peace.

Introduction

The truth is that we have to confront the fact that more of our people are dying because of the AIDS pandemic than any single conflict or combination of conflicts on our continent.”

Dr Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General, Organization of African Unity

The success of this Workshop in drawing together the densely interrelated issues of women, conflict and HIV/AIDS may be judged from the closing Address delivered by the Secretary-General of the OAU, Dr Salim Ahmed Salim. He told the delegates: “I want to pay tribute to FAS for organising this seminar, and to all those who have supported it to make it a worthwhile exercise. I will not talk about success — success lies in what happens after this seminar... The value of this encounter can only be evaluated in what happens after this. The people who have come here become more committed to the issues you have discussed here and the linkage between conflict and the AIDS pandemic.”

It was encouraging that people are becoming more and more sensitive to the serious threat that faces the African continent from the HIV/AIDS pandemic. He continued: “For a long time the issue was simply taken as peripheral. The truth is we have to confront the fact that more of our people are dying because of the AIDS pandemic than any single conflict or combination of conflicts on our continent. This is not to say that conflicts are not a threat. Conflicts are a serious threat to our continent. When we look at the statistics, they are staggering. We talk about peace, stability; we talk about development of our continent — but development is about people. Therefore, when you start thinking

about development for people who are being extinguished, what sort of development is that?

“The struggle against AIDS is a very crucial struggle for Africa right now. I would say really it is a number one priority, should be a number one priority for our continent. In terms of educating our people, in terms of sensitising our people, in terms of de-stigmatising our people — because one of the problems is that the minute a person is known to have HIV, he is quarantined... Therefore if someone knows he is going to be put in social quarantine, nobody would admit it, nobody would talk about it, and the spread becomes more and more...

“So the first thing I am saying is that we need to address this issue more centrally, with greater commitment and greater dynamism... It is true that the pandemic becomes much more difficult to manage in conflict situations... I am glad that the NGO community is at the foreground; I am glad also that FAS is taking the lead in this respect.”

Dr Salim then turned to the issue of entry points in conflict prevention in Africa and explained that, taking the example of any given country in a pre-conflict situation in Africa, it could be a difficult task for the OAU, which has little or no means, to coerce the leaders to resolve the ongoing tensions. He went on: “The only people that can do that coercion are people like you. The civil society can make a difference, always, in any given

situation. In the question of conflicts, I am glad that African NGOs now are becoming more and more active; and when they do so without taking a confrontational position, it helps governments, because there are things that governments cannot say, that you can say.

"We have been trying to organise a meeting for some time now that would bring together African NGOs and the OAU seriously, in a serious discourse, with the objective of sharing responsibilities and apportioning roles. There are things we can do, there are things you can do, but all together we all have the common objective. In that context, you

speeches, and I know you all cheer when we talk about it. But the truth is, especially in Africa, we still have a long way to go. I am telling my colleagues here in the General Secretariat that the OAU is one of the organisations that can be accused of suffering from male chauvinism. The problem however is not only the OAU, it is yourselves. Let me give you an example: there are positions we can appoint, positions appointed by leaders so why don't you agitate? We are going to have elections in Algiers, why don't you try and get one woman to contest the position of Assistant Secretary-General?"

The OAU was in the process of restructuring, he said, and in this restructuring competent women will be preferred. "Why? Because we don't have women in high positions in this organisation... We want the best that Africa can produce... If you send me a person because she is a woman, no, I will not appoint a woman simply to be symbolic. We don't want symbolism, we want performance."

The Secretary-General expressed pleasure at seeing H.E. Ruth Sando Perry, former Acting Head of State of Liberia, whom he described as being "a tower of strength for us". At a very critical time for Liberia, he added, she had played a powerful role through "her serenity, her politeness and her firmness in dealing with people who in the best of circumstances can be difficult."

He also paid tribute to FAS and to its board of directors and its distinguished, very energetic Executive Director. "Bineta Diop has been a source of inspiration, even if at times she has been continuously harassing us," he said, and added: "There are some harassments which I detest and harassments which I welcome — her harassment I welcome."



His excellency Dr Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General of the OAU, addressing the Workshop.

can always find me supporting you, myself, as the Secretary-General, and the organisation as a whole. We believe very strongly and very firmly that we need to interact more and more with the civil society for the objectives of the OAU and the objectives of our leaders to be understood."

Lastly, he spoke on the question of gender — the involvement of women, not only in conflict resolution, not only in development, but overall. "We are all talking about it and every time we meet we make a lot of

Why link HIV/AIDS to peace advocacy?

The high number of AIDS-related deaths among Africa's elite is making some countries difficult to govern. As a consequence, further conflicts in Africa are inevitable unless drastic measures are taken to prevent further infection."

Mr Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, addressing a Security Council meeting in New York in January 2000

How does AIDS enter the context of women and peace? In all its work on peace processes in Africa and women's role within those processes, FAS has frequently had to confront issues related to violent conflict and violence against women. With increasing frequency, HIV/AIDS has been reported as, and has been perceived as, a crucial interlocking factor in those issues.

Poverty and ignorance have long been

blamed for the rapid spread of the pandemic throughout the African continent; poverty, because poor people have no access to the condoms that represent "safe sex", the lynchpin in the struggle to contain AIDS worldwide; ignorance, because all too few people understand what HIV/AIDS is and how it is transmitted.

When to poverty and ignorance is added the social upheaval that invariably



FAS Board Members preparing for their General Assembly in Addis Ababa.

accompanies conflict, this disease takes on new dimensions and its spread is accelerated. Increasingly, sexual violence is becoming a weapon of war — and not only in Africa. Women and girls are often the victims of rape and, in many cases, the consequences of rape include sexually transmitted disease and HIV/AIDS.

Conflict also triggers mass movements of population, either reluctantly in order to move into territory deemed to be “safer”, or pell-mell as an enemy force advances. Such mass migrations inevitably result in the breakdown of law and order, and the loosening of family and community moral imperatives that had always been taken for granted. Within even well-ordered refugee camps, rape and/or prostitution offer fertile fields for AIDS to gain ground. Women and children often comprise as much as 80% of refugees and displaced persons, and their vulnerability is worsened when their security cannot be guaranteed in crowded and often insanitary camps.

As an international NGO working towards

the establishment of peace in Africa, in particular through the empowerment of women, FAS resolved at its General Assembly in Addis Ababa in April 2000 to add to its remit the issue of HIV/AIDS and the ravages that this pandemic is causing throughout Africa. As explained by Mrs Esi Sutherland-Addy, FAS Member, the efforts that FAS has put into its advocacy work have been partly fruitful, but the chance of transforming the leadership into a gender-oriented one will be even less effective if HIV is not eradicated. Henceforth an AIDS advocacy component will be integrated into the FAS work programme, and the necessary support mechanisms will be built into the organisation to ensure sustained AIDS-sensitive activities.

The Training Workshop which immediately followed the General Assembly and also held in Addis Ababa, started this process right away, bringing together women leaders from all over Africa to address issues of gender and HIV/AIDS under the theme of “Linking HIV/AIDS to Women’s Peace Advocacy.”

FAS peace advocacy and the HIV/AIDS issue

As an African woman and advocate for equal rights between women and men, I am very proud of FAS's achievements... Linking AIDS to peace, to gender violence, to advocacy is a comprehensive and fundamental approach to actively and increasingly involve the African woman in influencing policy formulation in all our countries where women's rights are still neglected."

H.E. Mrs Graça Machel, President of the Foundation for the Development of the Community (FDC)

Ms Julienne Ondziel, as a representative of FAS, explained that FAS is a humanitarian NGO created in Geneva in June 1996 by a number of women from different African States. It has as its aim the development, enhancement and promotion of leadership among African women in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in the continent.

Although it is a very young organisation, FAS has already distinguished itself through high-profile activities, such as training programmes in conflict zones, facilitating the participation of women in the peace process in Sierra Leone, acting as an observer during the presidential election in Liberia in 1997, organising peace missions to Burundi to demonstrate solidarity with the women of that country, and creating a space for dialogue for Burundian women in their negotiations (see Annex 1, FAS advocacy on peace and gender). Ms Ondziel said: "Through these actions, FAS has sought to encourage women, the principal victims of armed conflicts, to become the principal actors in the peace process. This involves transforming the image of woman from that of vulnerable victim into full-scale

actor, with the appropriate skills and agenda in the domain of peace and development in her country."

She said that, at the FAS General Assembly which preceded the Workshop, it had been agreed to reinforce the organisation's capacity by adding to the seven-member Executive Board a five-member Advisory Board.

Ms Ondziel concluded by saying that FAS was seizing the opportunity that UNAIDS had offered by giving its members the tools which would permit it to respond to the needs of those women who were victims of sexual violence in countries suffering from armed conflict.

Aims and strategies

The primary strategy is to build the capacity of FAS as a leading advocacy organisation in Africa dedicated to advancing the welfare of women in general and ensuring that their voices are heard in peace and development policies. The capacity-building effort will focus on integrating an AIDS advocacy component into the FAS work programme, and initiating the necessary support mechanisms to ensure sustained AIDS-sensitive activities.



FAS Members during their first General Assembly,
2 April 2000 at OAU headquarters.

Ideally, the outputs of such a programme would include:

- a corps of highly placed women composing the FAS membership who are more aware of the critical issues of AIDS, particularly its gender dimensions, and who possess advocacy capacities for AIDS within the context of conflict resolution at international, regional and national levels;
- an operational plan for collective and individual advocacy efforts;
- an advocacy package in the form of a manual on "HIV/AIDS in peace and development";
- evaluation of FAS's advocacy strategies and the progress made.

Messages of support

The move by FAS to bring the issue of HIV/AIDS within its ambit has won universal

approval, as may be seen from the following messages transmitted to the Addis Ababa Workshop:

H.E. Mrs Graça Machel, President of the Foundation for the Development of the Community (FDC), said: "As an African woman and advocate for equal rights between women and men, I am very proud of FAS's achievements and especially the realisation of this FAS General Assembly.

"Through marches and petitions, women in Mozambique are also advocating for the establishment of a family law to ensure equal rights between men and women, and qualification of domestic violence as a crime.

"Linking AIDS to peace, to gender violence to advocacy is a comprehensive and fundamental approach to actively and increasingly involve the African woman in influencing poli-

cy formulation in all our countries where women's rights are still neglected.

"I take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Governing Board for the wonderful job that you have done and I wish the new Board a successful mandate, and I would like to assure you that you could count on our full support to uplift women's rights.

"I particularly salute your unwavering advocacy programme for peace linking and peaceful conflict resolution, and the protection of women against all forms of violence."

Mrs Lisbet Palme, member, United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, commended the FAS initiative and expressed tremendous admiration for women in Africa, with all their triumphs and all their tragedies. She went on: "In the fight against AIDS, I believe that a key challenge is to provide facts and concrete information about how this disease is spread, as well as about the means to counteract it. Such information must be made available to both old and young, of both sexes. Informative discussions must take place in the schools, in the homes, in the media — literally everywhere. In parallel, we have to work for increased support to all children and young people living in an environment marked by AIDS, such as child-headed families or children caring for dying parents.

"It remains a fact that the fight against AIDS cannot be won unless we are able to strengthen the role of women — as wives, as partners, as mothers and grandmothers, in society at large. For many reasons, it should be considered self-

evident that women must participate in all negotiations between partners involved in military conflicts... I sincerely hope and believe that Femmes Africa Solidarité can become a vehicle for making more headway in the fight against AIDS in Africa."

Ambassador Mohammed Sahnoun, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Africa, spoke of "the devastating damage caused on our continent by prolonged murderous conflicts and humanitarian tragedies." Millions of African families are displaced every year, the lives of thousands of able-bodied African men are lost every year, thousands are rendered handicapped, leaving behind widows, orphans and women heads of families who are ill-equipped for such roles. With such heavy losses of the male population in these conflicts, the aftermath rests even more heavily on the shoulders of women.

He declared: "The time is therefore ripe to revitalise the traditional role of women as peacekeepers and, together with the men, to fashion out ways and means of saving our great continent from total collapse due to undue hostilities."

The aims of FAS to create, strengthen and promote the leading role of women in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts are laudable and worthy of encouragement, he said, and concluded: "I appreciate the commitment, courage and determination of the members of Femmes Africa Solidarité towards promoting women's empowerment in general and engendering conflict resolution in particular."

Understanding the HIV/AIDS pandemic

“Because of ignorance as well as men’s brutality, there are so many beliefs, behaviours and attitudes in our society that we should give priority to changing What is certain is that having sex with a virgin girl is NOT a cure for AIDS. This is a commonly held but totally false belief; such a practice only serves to accelerate the spread of the virus.”

H.E. Mrs Ruth Sando Perry, former Head of State, Liberia

What is HIV/AIDS?

AIDS is a communicable disease which destroys the capacity of the body to defend itself against other diseases. It stands for Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome, and the virus which causes AIDS is named Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus or HIV.

On a world scale, it is estimated by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) that 34,300,000 people today are living with this virus and 24,500,000 of them are in sub-Saharan Africa. Again in sub-Saharan Africa, the number of new infections in 1999 reached 4 million. Since around 1980 when the pandemic was first recognised, there have been 18,800,000 deaths from AIDS, and in 1999 alone there were 2,800,000 such deaths. UNAIDS which, like FAS, is based in Geneva, Switzerland, regularly publishes updated figures on every country in the world.

In healthy persons, the white cells in our blood (as opposed to the red cells) are the ones that resist the invasion of disease germs. HIV is a very small germ called a virus which destroys the white cells and makes them helpless to defend us against the germs that cause such contagious diseases as diarrhoea, pneumonia or tuberculosis.

People with HIV infection, who are said to be HIV-positive or sero-positive, can remain healthy and show no symptoms for several years. But sooner or later their illness will become full-blown AIDS. They will become feverish, feel constantly tired, suffer from diarrhoea and vomiting and rapidly lose weight. Again, months or even years may pass but death from AIDS at present appears to be inevitable, often because the body no longer has any immunity from the diseases mentioned above. This is especially true when the infected person cannot have a decent standard of living with adequate food and a healthy environment.

There is still no “cure” for AIDS, although certain very expensive drugs can hold off the transition from being HIV-positive to developing full-blown AIDS.

How is HIV/AIDS transmitted?

- (a) The main mode of transmission of the virus is through heterosexual (man-woman) relations. Most commonly it is transmitted through having unprotected sexual relations — whether man to woman, man to man, or even woman to woman — with a person already carrying the virus.

(b) The virus can also be transmitted through direct contact with the blood of a person already infected, for instance, by sharing syringes, by being tattooed with an unsterilised needle or by receiving a transfusion of infected blood.

(c) HIV can also pass from an infected mother to her child; this is called parental transmission. The baby becomes infected while in the mother's womb or as it is being born. There is also a small risk of the disease being passed to the baby through breast milk.

HIV can be passed from either a man or a woman. A person who is not infected with HIV can take steps to avoid infection, just as a person who is already infected with HIV can take steps to prevent passing the infection to someone else.

How is the disease NOT transmitted?

HIV/AIDS is NOT transmitted by coughing and sneezing, nor by touching infected persons or having close non-sexual contact with them. You CANNOT give or get HIV by touching, hugging, shaking hands or sitting close to

other people, nor by sharing combs, sheets, towels or clothes. It CANNOT be transmitted by eating the same foods, drinking the same water or sharing kitchen utensils.

You CANNOT give or get HIV by sharing toilets or latrines, bath tubs or being in contact through tears or sweat. It CANNOT be transmitted by mosquitoes, bedbugs, fleas or any other insect or animal. In short, the virus CANNOT be passed on through casual person-to-person contact in normal everyday settings. In the community environment, this means there is no risk of contracting AIDS as a result of routine contact between one person and another.

Of course, people employed in the fields of health and first aid are well advised to take serious precautions against accidental infection by coming into contact with infected blood. The routine precautions which have always been recommended for health workers, in order to protect them from such infections transmitted through blood as hepatitis B or septicaemia, will be equally effective against the transmission of HIV.

You can be very close to a person with AIDS and not catch the virus. Unlike a com-



FAS Board Members discussing HIV/AIDS issues prior to the Workshop.

mon cold or influenza, HIV/AIDS is actually quite difficult to "catch," except through the three ways outlined above.

How can HIV infection be prevented?

1. The most obvious way of preventing this infection would be not to have sexual relationships at all. This is not a practical proposition for a majority of men and women in the world.
2. The next best thing is for a couple who know they are both uninfected by the HIV/AIDS virus to stay faithful to each other and never to have sex with anyone else. (An excess of alcohol may tend to weaken the resolve of either partner!)
3. In all other situations, men and women should practice "safe sex". That means using a condom for all types of sexual activity. The purpose of the condom is to ensure that semen, fluid from the vagina or blood do not enter the vagina, mouth or anus of the partner. It is those fluids that most readily transmit the virus. Condoms are well worth their price!
4. Avoid unnecessary blood transfusions. For instance, people should seek proper medical treatment for such illnesses as malaria or hookworm before they become anaemic and therefore need an emergency transfusion.
5. If such a transfusion is necessary, they should try to ensure they are given only blood that has been tested and has proved negative for HIV.
6. If somebody cannot avoid skin-piercing by razor-blades, needles or syringes, they should insist on them being carefully sterilised first.
7. People should not share razor blades, because they might come in contact with blood from an infected person. And they

should never share syringes unless they have been thoroughly sterilised.

8. Cover cuts and wounds with waterproof plasters or a piece of clean cloth.
9. Women with HIV should seek advice before getting pregnant, because they may pass HIV on to their baby. Pregnancy can be avoided by using condoms or other family planning methods.

In conflict zones all these conditions are difficult to meet. Sensitisation of both men and women is therefore crucial for a change of attitude and thus better efficiency in the prevention.

What is the HIV Test?

After being infected, the body responds over the next eight to twelve weeks by making antibodies against the virus. The aim of the HIV Test is to check whether those antibodies are present in the blood. Most health centres are capable of carrying out this test, and all hospitals and health centres are obliged by law to keep the result private and confidential. If the test is negative, it does not mean a person will be protected in the future. The only protection is to follow the advice about HIV prevention.

And if you test HIV-positive?

AIDS is a disease, like cancer or polio. It is NOT the result of witchcraft or a curse or divine punishment. It is essential that HIV-positive persons tell their partners, who can then take the necessary steps to protect themselves from infection. Partners should also help to plan for the future and make such family arrangements as may be necessary. A doctor or qualified health worker will explain what signs and symptoms to expect.

Understanding the HIV/AIDS pandemic will help women's NGOs in their advocacy work to prevent the spread of the disease.

Gender issues of AIDS in conflict settings and peace resolution

Rape may have contributed to the deaths of several women returning from rebel-controlled areas in the east of Sierra Leone. A UN human rights officer who visited the town of Kenema to assess the health and social services for rape victims quoted doctors there as saying they “strongly suspect” that injuries caused by rape and sexual abuse had contributed to the deaths of several women who had been abducted.

UN officials based in Sierra Leone

Ms Jacqueline Ruth Bataringaya, HIV/AIDS Coordinator for ActionAid, recalled that, of the 33.6 million people in the world living with HIV/AIDS, 23.3 million live in Africa, and new infections in the continent totalled 3.8 million. She pointed out that for decades we have addressed the pandemic, known how to prevent it and seen that — even with minimal resources as in Uganda, Senegal and parts of Tanzania — the trends of the epidemic can be reversed. “So that 3.8 million is a shame, both for the African continent and for the international community.”

Comparing the different African regions, she pointed out that, by contrast with sub-Saharan Africa in general and East Africa, West Africa has much lower rates of HIV infection. Why is that? she asked. Why has West Africa been spared and why is it now on the brink of an explosive HIV infection? She explained that in West Africa the HIV prevalent is Type 2, whose disease course is milder so that people live longer, take longer to die. But a dynamic regional mixing is taking place, with masses of people moving from place to place. “So

over the next decade we know there will be an increase in the number of people in West Africa with HIV Type 1, which is much more rapid and also has a much more devastating impact on the populations and the economies.” Greater integration between West and East Africa would be a good thing, but we must also expect HIV too to become more integrated across the regions.

Ms Bataringaya went on: “In most of the world outside Africa, it is men who are more infected because it is men who are having sex with men who are more at risk. But in Africa it’s the reverse. It is women who are more infected, a 55% rate, and for every 13 women only 10 men are infected... Among 15- to 19-year-olds, girls are five or six times more likely to be infected than boys the same age... Generally speaking, girls growing up in Africa have a very high chance of eventually dying of HIV as long as they lead their life according to the acceptable social and cultural norms.” She added that the pandemic has already created over 10 million orphans, and the burden of orphan care again falls on women.

Emphasising that wherever blood was

involved during the sex act, the risk of HIV passing from the man to the woman was all the greater, she observed that men who are circumcised tend to have a slight protection against HIV. Therefore, among populations where male circumcision is practised, the epidemic takes longer to filter into a population. But the case is the opposite with women. Female circumcision makes the woman more vulnerable because the scarring in the vagina implies greater chances of tearing during sex.

It had been shown that young girls with higher levels of education were less likely to become infected because they understood the epidemic — they didn't think it was just about witchcraft. People with limited education were less able to read the pamphlets distributed about HIV. At the start, everyone thought the disease affected commercial sex workers or loose women; so once again the blame fell on women, as it did in the case of sexually transmitted infections. Yet, because of our cultures, Ms Bataringaya said, women are expected to be virgins when they are young and until they are married, while men

are expected to have sexual experience.

All this perpetuates the notion that if a man sleeps with a virgin, all his problems will be solved. She added: "I am not saying women should be promiscuous, but there are some of these cultural beliefs that actually bind us and subjugate us still more." What does a community think when a child is sexually abused? she asked. Is the matter settled by discussion with the menfolk under a tree and the exchange of a goat as compensation, while the abuser continues to abuse other children within the community or the family? Who is actually looking into the practices of traditional healers, if they affect women? There is a complacency in society that is unbelievable. Ms Bataringaya commented: "I'm sure if it is something that affected men, by now laws would be in place to arrest and try those traditional healers... This kind of practice has to stop."

Analysing the gender issues of HIV/AIDS in conflict will enable women's groups to define the appropriate advocacy strategies and measures to be taken.

Strategies

It is simplistic to think in terms of evil transmitters and innocent victims. In the AIDS game there are no winners and losers, just losers. Men must be helped to understand that, by protecting others, they are protecting themselves.

Dr Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS

First Training Workshop

The First HIV Training Workshop, organised by FAS in April 2000 in Addis Ababa and supported by UNAIDS, set some extremely useful guidelines as examples of the kind of training that must be undertaken. Besides raising awareness about the interrelated problems of gender, conflict and HIV/AIDS, the principal aims of the Workshop were to provide the participants with knowledge that they could then disseminate in their work and in their respective organisations and countries, and to develop a module for training on HIV and other related issues as an advocacy tool for women's NGOs.

The Workshop also provided an opportunity to introduce the participants to such regional bodies as the OAU, the ECA and the AWCPD and to give them greater insight into the mechanisms through which these bodies operate.

At the same time, the participants firmly brought the issues of gender and HIV/AIDS not only within the OAU and ECA but also within the ADB, ECOWAS and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). It is noteworthy that, since the Workshop was held, the OAU has put HIV/AIDS as a priority issue on its agenda and

has linked it to the theme of women in conflict situations, while the ECA together with UNAIDS has planned a special forum on HIV/AIDS-related issues.

The stated objectives of the Workshop were, as reiterated by Mrs Marie-Louise Baricako, FAS Member:

- to enable FAS to address issues relating to HIV/AIDS in its work on conflict resolution and peace processes;
- to enable FAS members to disseminate this knowledge in their work and in their respective organisations and countries;
- to assist FAS to advocate for the inclusion of issues related to gender and HIV/AIDS into the work of sub-regional and regional bodies;
- to sensitise women who will channel the knowledge to the local and national levels;
- to develop a module for training on HIV/AIDS and other related issues as an advocacy tool for women's NGOs.

The outcomes that FAS would like to see are:

- the empowerment of a group of African women leaders of NGOs and grassroots organisations trained on issues relating to gender and HIV/AIDS as they pertain to peace advocacy;
- the empowerment of a group of African

women leaders, equipped to influence African leaders and institutions on the linkages of gender and HIV/AIDS with peace advocacy;

- a greater awareness at the national and local levels on HIV/AIDS prevention;
- the development of a training module which will be used by FAS members and their affiliated organisations as an advocacy tool; the module will be developed after the Workshop by a specialist in the field;
- the establishment of a working group from the FAS board to review and improve on the training module;
- field testing of the training module.

In the context of war, the lack of political, economic and social stability has a grave impact on civilian communities. Besides the loss of homes and means of livelihood, they usually have to put up with a total absence of social support and health services. So they lose any possibility of treatment for the common endemic diseases — gastroenteritis, tuberculosis, malaria.

In such circumstances, many women know that they have been infected with AIDS and many more fear that they have. They desperately need support not only to recover from the violence they have experienced but also to face the facts about HIV and AIDS. Such support is rarely available, while their chances of even palliative treatment if they contract AIDS are nil.

One of the strategies proposed by FAS is for its members to undergo training in both conflict management skills and in issues related to HIV/AIDS, so as to equip them to link these two issues and make them more effective in assisting women in war-ravaged countries. Through such training, FAS can effectively lobby for the integration of HIV/AIDS and related issues within the African peace and development agenda. The training programmes would not be limited to FAS mem-

bers but would also include African women leaders, so that the knowledge and skills thus gained can be shared with local NGOs and women at grassroots level.

On a broader canvas, FAS is well placed, through its various advocacy activities, to ensure that national, sub-regional and regional institutions in Africa pay much greater attention to the linkages between gender, HIV/AIDS and development than has hitherto been the case.

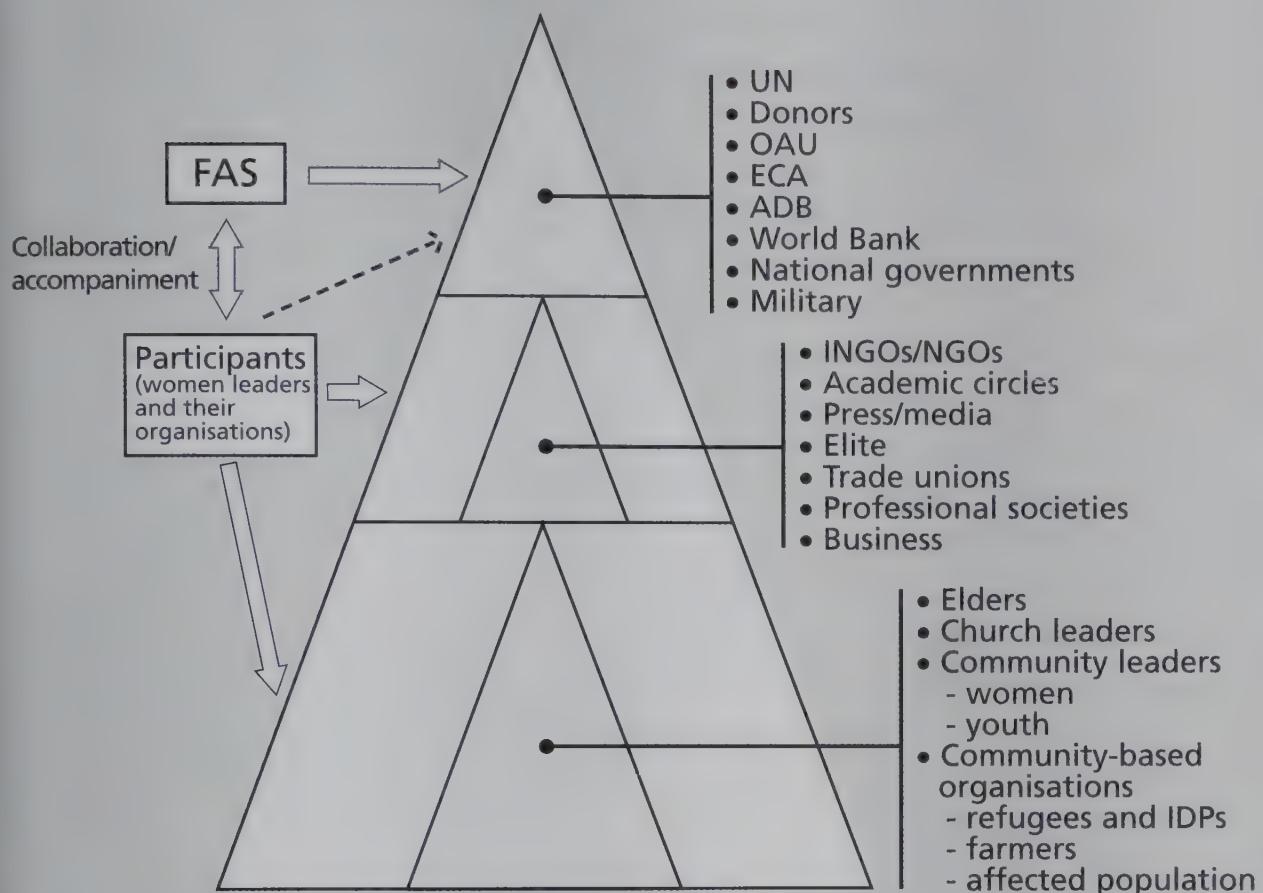
Strategies at the national level

Ms Thandi Orleyn and Ms Marion Shaer shared their experience of South Africa with the participants, emphasising the importance of women building coalitions. They stressed that the mobilisation of women of different cultures, ethnic backgrounds, racial identities and political affiliations to work towards a common interest was essential to effective advocacy and negotiation. As was the case in South Africa, women, who have long been involved in the political struggle, took the process of negotiating the interim constitution and transitional systems as an opportunity to rally, as women, and in so doing influenced the future dispensation. The many successes they had and the new challenges they faced were shared. It must be noted that, in the case of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, building coalitions will also prove to be very effective.

Noting that women in Africa occupy a secondary status in public situations and are therefore at a disadvantage when negotiating, Ms Thandi Orleyn and Ms Marion Shaer then gave the participants the following presentation on the do's and don'ts of peace negotiations, drawing on their experience in the South African national negotiation process:

- It is important for women to understand the process so that they can best utilise it, have the skills involved in the negotiation

The Advocacy Pyramid



Once the problem and what needs to be done to solve it are identified, the following need to be established:

- How the problem can be solved (e.g. change in laws, new laws)
- What are the entry points in existing mechanisms
- What are the interests and power/leverage of the target groups
- Whom to talk to:
 - at what level
 - where you are

Thandi Orleyn and Marion Shaer saw their experience in negotiations in South Africa in terms of an advocacy pyramid. The top section of the pyramid would represent the entry points to the major interested parties and where the greatest leverage of power may be applied. In this section would appear the UN, donors, the OAU, ECA, ADB, the World Bank, national governments and the military — and it was at this section that FAS should aim its input.

Below, in the second section, would appear international and national

NGOs, academics and the media, as well as professional societies such as lawyers and bankers, business and the private sector. Trade unions and religious groups would also appear here.

Closer to the grassroots, the bottom section of the pyramid would include village elders, Church, community and youth leaders — most especially women — and community-based organisations, such as farmers or refugees and displaced persons, as well as the affected population in general.

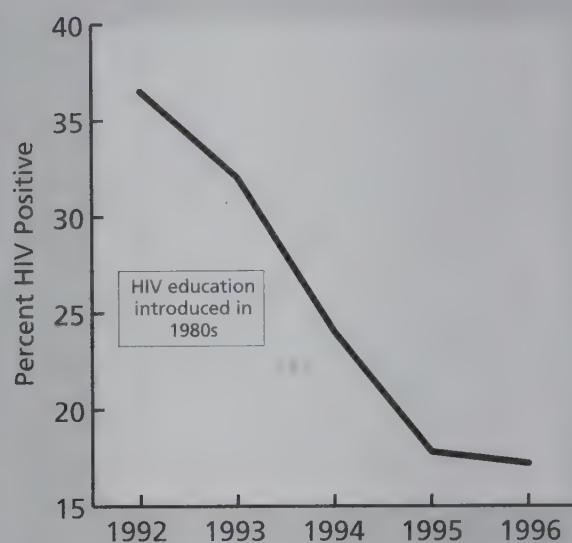
process, and understand how they can make use of different forms of power to benefit the negotiation process.

- It is important to lay a good, structured groundwork before embarking on negotiations.
- Good preparation is essential and enables one to deal from a position of strength.
- Don't make the mistake of over-estimating your own team and under-estimating the other side.
- At the negotiating table, it is vital to present a united front, and not to be defensive, apportion blame or apologise.
- Don't make compromises that will not be acceptable to your constituency.
- And don't lose your temper — unless it is appropriate or part of your strategy, and you have seriously considered the outcome!
- Above all, they advised, don't make promises you cannot keep, don't lie or break a trust, and don't allow the expectations of your team, the other team and your own constituency to become unmanageable.
- Finally, do consider promises carefully before committing yourself to them, always tell the truth, do everything that will enhance an atmosphere of trust, and try to manage effectively the expectations of the other side, your own team and your constituency.

Sharing other experiences

Several other experiences were shared from different countries. Among them was the case of Liberia, where it was reported that a National AIDS Control and STDs Programme was created in 1987. However, the concrete data on the numbers of HIV/AIDS cases in the country could not be reliably reported due to the poor compilation of statistics, and there was still no well-defined and implementable national policy on AIDS/STDs. There was a dire need for a standard clinical laboratory in the country capable of running a confirmatory test following initial AIDS tests such as the

Sex education reduces HIV prevalence in Uganda 20 – 24-year-olds in Nsambya



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ELIZA test. Health personnel needed to be appropriately trained, and communities ought to be sensitised to the problems. Finally, the UN Drugs Control Programme (UNDCP) needed to concentrate its efforts to help Liberia to step up education activities, for instance, on the adverse effects of drug abuse.

In Rwanda, following the genocide and massacres, there appeared to be no hope of any cure for the AIDS pandemic on the horizon. According to one of the participants, "we have discovered to our horror that the traditional healers are recommending that the only remedy for this disease is to have sexual relations with a young virgin girl. As a result, men affected with the disease, in their quest for a cure, are not hesitating to rape little girls aged three years or even younger in order to be sure they are virgins." She formally urged that the Rwandan authorities should be requested to take draconian and urgent measures against those who commit and those who instigate such crimes, not omitting those who are implicated through their silence.

Working through regional and sub-regional peace mechanisms

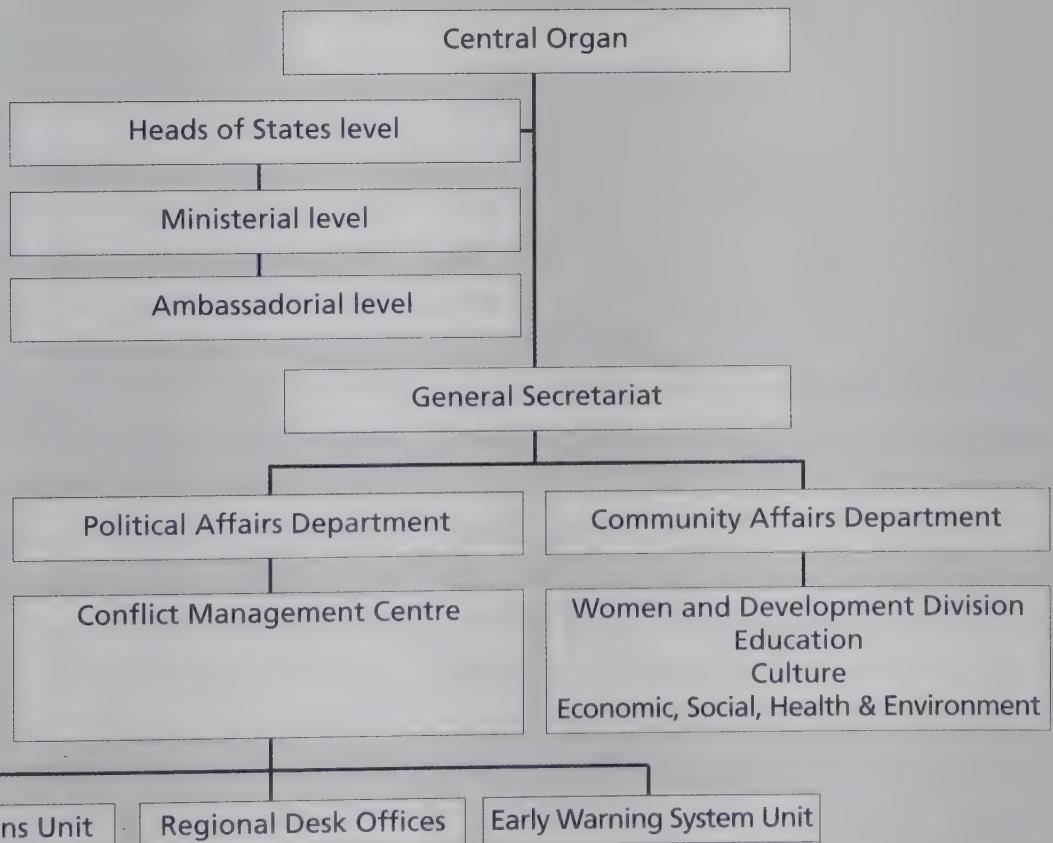
Organization of African Unity (OAU)

The Organization of African Unity was established in 1963 to fight colonialism and promote unity among African nations. The OAU decided in June 1993 to establish a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. Its primary function is to anticipate and prevent conflicts and to understand peace-making and peace-building functions. The mechanism revolves around a central body on Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, and an OAU Peace Fund has been established to support the operational activities of the mechanism.

This body has already undertaken a number of initiatives in Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the Comoros, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of the Congo. The OAU has also been drawing from past experience to establish an African Early Warning System on Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, which will allow the speedy exchange of information on such situations and will encourage early political action. Such early warning systems will include women's groups.

Both this Mechanism and its operational activities as well as the Peace Fund are therefore two very obvious entry points for FAS in its strategies for linking the issues of women, the prevention of conflict and the management of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. FAS would seek out these entry points in order to facilitate greater involvement of women in the fol-

Organigram of the OAU (Political and Community Affairs Departments)



lowing capacities:

- mediators and peace ambassadors
- members of Councils of Elders
- members of observatories for conflict prevention
- members of peace-keeping forces.

The OAU, for its part, is very open to building new partnerships with such bodies as FAS, as an integral part of its commitment to the African Platform for Action (PFA).

In his address to the Workshop, Mr Sam Ibok, Director of the Political Department of the OAU, started by saying that the OAU is moving very much into the area of addressing the subject of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on our continent. Because more than any other cause — apart from conflicts and other pandemics like malaria — AIDS is the number one killer on the continent. It is depleting the work force and affecting the most vulnerable sections of the population and its most useful assets, young people.

Mr Ibok confessed that many of the Member States and many people outside Africa were beginning to question the relevance of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, and — he regretted to say — not without justification. The Mechanism has been in existence for almost six years now, he said, yet we have been unable to show one fair case of a success story in addressing the problems of conflict and instability on our continent. On the contrary, what we have been experiencing is the proliferation of conflicts in almost every region of Africa.

Of course, by virtue of its own preventive mandate, the Mechanism has very serious limitations and constraints, he said, adding: "It says we must act to prevent conflict before it actually arises and, in reality, preventing a conflict is quite a Herculean task, not least because of the sovereignty of African countries.

"As you know, the charter of the OAU provides for non-interference in the internal affairs of the Member States. Now many of our Member States have found it very convenient to hide under this charter provision, to resist any attempt of the OAU to become involved in issues of conflict prevention and management within what is considered to be the domain of Member States. So we have a problem of what we call the point of entry.

"People have said you should be moving into early warning, identify the causes of problems, try to tackle them before they become full-blown conflicts. Now as you know, early warning is available in every part of this continent. Before a crisis actually breaks out, we all see the crisis coming. In Côte d'Ivoire, we saw what was happening. In the DRC, after the genocide in Rwanda, even before the genocide, the whole world knew what was happening. We knew something was going wrong in Rwanda. But the problem has always been: how do you utilise the estimates that you collect from early warning to impact on societies which are on the verge of collapsing?

"And so, we have to ask the Member States to allow the OAU the time and the space to make an intervention at the time the crisis is in its incipient stages, to be able to address the problem. Normally there is a lot of resistance because in every country, without exception, people outside normally see the problem before the governments, and every time you approach governments and say: look, we think you have a problem, the natural tendency of most governments is to say, we don't have a problem. And until the problem actually erupts into a full-blown conflict, the governments are reluctant to accept that there is a problem and that there are people who can help to ameliorate the problem.

"The second mandate of the Mechanism relates to the management of conflicts. As



Africa-wide participants at the FAS training workshop, OAU conflict management centre, Addis Ababa, April 2000.

have said, we do not always succeed in preventing conflict. In those situations where we have succeeded, they are not well publicised because we don't have the CNN following the Secretary-General of the OAU around wherever he goes. But let us look at the situations where the conflicts have actually broken out — and there are so many of them. We have had the situation in Sierra Leone, before then Liberia, we had the situation in Somalia, in the DRC, in Burundi, in Angola and almost all the regions of the continent. What is the OAU doing about this? Our mechanism has been deployed in very specific cases, acting on its own or with the collaboration of partners, or it has acted in support of some sub-regional organisations. We see our role with the sub-regional mechanisms as being complementary. And therefore, we do not want to

compete with each other. We think that the organisation which has the comparative advantage should be able to take the lead.

"As you know, almost all the sub-regional organisations have established mechanisms for conflict prevention. What we are trying to do now is to build a synergy between what the sub-regional organisations do and what we do. Where the sub-regional organisation takes the lead, we will try to bring a continental perspective to bear on certain initiatives, and as such we have worked with SADC when there was a problem in Lesotho, and we worked with ECOWAS on the problem in Sierra Leone. On the other hand, we are taking the lead with the problem in the Comoros where there is a separatist problem on the island.

"Most importantly what was happening is

that sometimes countries in conflict will become the base for all sorts of activities, such as drug trafficking or money laundering, and so here again you have a situation where forces which are external to the continent are very active in causing instability and division within the continent. So it is not always the case that the problems in our countries are created by Africans themselves; often the problems are instigated and fuelled from outside.

"We all know the root causes of conflict on the continent, we know about life in the absence of democracy in most of our countries, the rise of powerful men and what are called warlords who impose their will on the rest of the society. We accept them and even, in some places, we make them president. They are more or less outside the realm of laws in our societies and our continent... There is corruption in many of our countries and many of our leaders are not held accountable. Those in a position to protect public property are the same ones who abuse that property, and our people have been so traumatised that they are not able to hold the leaders and people in places of authority accountable for what they do.

"So I think we have identified the root causes — a variety of factors which include the role of people outside the continent, for instance the proliferation of small arms. How many African countries produce small arms and suchlike weapons? Who is proliferating these weapons on our continent and what effect is this having on the stability or instability of our continent? How is it that we cannot check the flow and proliferation of these weapons? What about the problem of drugs that is affecting our youth? You have the phenomenon of child soldiers — under what influence are they? Who are the people that are using them to commit mayhem in many of our societies? So we are saying, let us stop

talking about the root causes, because we have identified the root causes, but let us build partnerships that allow us to begin to address these problems."

Mr Ibok also spoke of such problems as helping women and children in the refugee camps to sustain themselves and to have a life after the life in the camps, and during the post-conflict reconstruction. "What is it we can do together to begin to build up societies which have been traumatised by conflict and war around the continent?" he asked.

He underlined the constraints that resulted from the OAU's lack of resources, but added: "If you have a programme, if you have people you are working with in the area of HIV/AIDS, we will work with you in that area. But OAU is not a funding agency, we are not in a position to fund. We can mobilise resources for those who are actually dealing with these problems on the ground."

Earlier, in a key address at the opening of the Workshop, Professor C.A.L. Johnson, Director a.i. of the OAU's Community Affairs Department, referring to the International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights, told the participants that violence against women in all its forms during peacetime and in conflict situations increases their vulnerability to HIV infection. Such violence includes, *inter alia*, sexual violence and rape.

He commented that rape has been known to be used as an instrument of war. Even in camps for the displaced and refugees, women are constantly exposed to violent situations, which could lead to their being infected with the HIV virus. The situation of this vulnerable group is usually overlooked. Inadequate food security and/or lack of adequate medical services in camps often leads to stigmatisation and discrimination, and this therefore contributes to the spread of opportunistic diseases. There is therefore need to protect

women from sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, and to ensure their access to health information and adequate medical care. This is a matter of women's human rights.

He then informed participants that on its part, the OAU has left no stone unturned in its effort at sensitising its Member States, not only at the highest political level, but also at all levels of society. In this regard, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, meeting at its Twenty-eighth Ordinary Session in Dakar, Senegal, adopted a Declaration on the AIDS Pandemic in Africa. In the same vein, a Declaration on the situation of women in Africa in the context of family health, an African Plan of Action, was also adopted at the Addis Ababa Summit. These declarations, resolutions and decisions now need to be implemented within the framework of the new International Partnership for the Control of HIV/AIDS.

Later, Professor Johnson explained that the OAU is at present changing its strategies to ensure that what is being done for the continent reaches into every corner where it is needed. An example is this Workshop itself, which FAS had convened with the assistance of the OAU. The new strategy is intended to bring the OAU closer to the various associations, NGOs and other movements.

He emphasised that, as the secretariat of an intergovernmental organisation, and despite the desire of the OAU to have a closer collaboration with NGOs, it had not been easy. However, this has now become possible. In the near future, the secretariat will begin signing agreements of cooperation and memoranda of understanding with associations such as FAS to ensure that what is done has an impact at a lower level.

He informed the meeting that the ongoing re-structuring exercise of the secretariat is not yet completed but it will endeavour "to

make the OAU a place of choice for women in all the recruitment; women will be favoured, and the women's section has been raised to the rank of a division." He added that the secretariat has decided to consider women's problems as cross-cutting issues to be dealt with at all levels, whether they concern health, education and so on.

He continued that it was hoped that by the year 2001 a new protocol would be added to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights relating to women's human rights and the practices harmful to the health of women.

Mrs Mary Maboreke, Head of the Women and Development Division of the OAU's Community Affairs Department, commented on her department's activities relating to education, culture and social affairs issues within the continent. She suggested that the Declaration approved at the Kampala Conference in 1996 on empowering women through functional literacy and education of the girl-child could be a document on which both FAS and the OAU could build when seeking strategies for linking HIV/AIDS to women's peace advocacy. Still within the framework of illiteracy and education, the OAU had declared the Decade of Education from 1997 to 2006.

The OAU had also been working very closely with the Federation for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) and the African Federation of Women Entrepreneurs (AFWE), always with a view to facilitating women's participation on a basis of parity with men. And since older people were often obliged to deal with AIDS orphans and provide care, the OAU was working with HelpAge International. Already a number of legislative instruments were in place, she said.

Referring to the AWCPD, she said its mandate is supposed to be women's highest-level entry point to the decision-making process

on the continent. It is supposed to advise the Secretary-General of the OAU and the Executive Secretary of the ECA on issues of mainstreaming gender into peace and development. She commented: "We should re-cast the argument we have been making for so long that women are not present in the decision-making processes affecting this continent. We should begin to ask how we can make that Committee deliver, how that Committee can actually give us what we require."

Calling for the creation of a strategic tie between sub-regional organisations with the OAU, she added: "If we increase the number of people involved, we will be able to have more hands; you will become our hands and our heads and our advocates elsewhere."

Commenting on the Workshop, Mrs Maboreke said: "When I came here and listened to some of the discussion, I realised to what extent our own department is the target of this Workshop. For instance, I am looking at the lessons learned — what did we say when we linked AIDS to conflict issues? "We talked about illiteracy, and these things are on the charts around us. We talked about illiteracy, education, poverty, socio-economic status of women, women and health — not only the health of the women but health in terms of women as care-takers, so the health of those people that women have to care for. We talked about the continuing escalating conflicts on the continent. We also talked about women's absence from the decision-making structures.

"If my recollection was right, we said all these factors have an impact. We have to look at them when we consider the linkage between AIDS/HIV and women's advocacy on peace issues. These are issues which are central when we are trying to link AIDS/HIV to women's advocacy and peace issues, and these are the issues my department deals with."

Referring to the mechanisms and tools

such as protocols and conventions deployed by the OAU, Mrs Maboreke said it would not help to enumerate them all, because everyone could go to the document list. She added "What is important is to actually define what the problem is. For me the difficulty is not that people are not aware of the problems. It is not that we don't recognise the need to deal with issues of gender, women's concerns, issues of linking AIDS and women's peace advocacy — although I must say it is a very new and welcome development which FAS has brought about and I salute that..."

"For me, it is not a question of a lack of a regulatory framework that is enabling, it is not a lack of awareness as such, it's a lack of follow-up and implementation. We don't have effective monitoring mechanisms. And I think for this we all have to take our share of responsibility because we are all in it together..."

"Speaking as somebody coming from the General Secretariat of the OAU, we are supposed to be coordinating, but I don't think our coordination is working very well. We are supposed to be networking with all the other stakeholders and key players. I also don't think that networking is working very well either. There are so many things that we are supposed to be doing together. I don't think there is coherence even in our approaches to these issues. So for me, I think the most important thing that is required is for us to map out who is doing what, where and how. I need to know what FAS is doing. I need to know what Abantu is doing. I need to know what others are doing."

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

The Economic Commission for Africa is equally a vital partner for FAS, since it is essential for women to play a far greater and more dynamic role in conflict preventive diplomacy at every level. Mandated to promote the social and

Women in power and decision-making

“The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to take part in the Government of his/her country. The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women’s social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and administration and sustainable development in all areas of life ... Achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in decision-making will provide a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society and is needed in order to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning. Equality in political decision-making performs a leverage function without which it is highly unlikely that a real integration of the equality dimension in government policy-making is feasible. In this respect, women’s equal participation in political life plays a pivotal role in the general process of the advancement of women.”

Beijing Platform for Action, page 109, paragraph 181

What the data show

The data regarding women in decision-making show gender discrepancies in access to resources of education and power sharing in Africa:

- 0–0.9% in 32 countries
- 10–20% in 10 countries
- 20–30% in 4 countries
- Seychelles 27%
- South Africa 25%
- Mozambique 25%
- Eritrea 21%

The same scenario is repeated with representation of women in government, whereby 36 countries have less than 10% women. In 11 countries there are 10–20% women:

- Mali 10%
- Namibia 10%

- Niger 10%
- Ghana 11%
- Burkina Faso 11%
- Ghana 11%
- Cape Verde 13%
- Uganda 13%
- Benin 15%
- Guinea 15%
- Tanzania 16%

and only 2 countries have over 20%: Gambia with 22% and Seychelles with 31%.

What is striking is that both in the case of women’s representation in parliament and government, the countries that have facilitated women’s access to decision-making are not necessarily the giants in terms of GDP, GNP, in terms of performance in education, economic activity or in access to basic health services. Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger, Ethiopia, Angola and Chad have made a very commendable effort in enabling women’s access to power sharing. Similarly, in countries emerging from conflict, e.g. Eritrea, South Africa, Uganda and Rwanda, it seems to have been easier for women to make their way into decision-making structures, thanks to the absence of the rigidity of structures.

Action needed

Countries need to urgently implement gender sensitization and mainstreaming programmes to facilitate policy adjustments. They need to facilitate education programmes, both formal and informal, that will hasten sensitization at all levels. Some must consider positive discrimination and the use of quotas in elections and appointments to place women in decision-making positions.

Source: Extract from the African Women Centre’s CD-rom on the Status of Women in Africa, for further information please consult the ECA Web site.

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economic development of the African continent, the ECA has set up two institutions aimed at promoting African women's issues: the Committee on Women and Development (CWD) and the African Centre for Women (ACW). The ACW in particular includes among its strategic priorities assisting governments to enhance their capacities to implement the African and Global Platforms for Action. The Centre also provides governments with technical support to meet their international obligations to prepare reports for the CEDAW. The meetings organised by the Centre are therefore a crucial entry point for such NGOs as FAS to interact with governments.

The ECA is very well aware that women in the continent remain outside the mainstream decision-making process and are therefore still not in a position to effectively influence the structures of governance. Since they are also, at best, only sparsely represented in the policy-making structures, whatever gender policies emerge are not always effective in addressing inequalities and discrimination such as women continue to face. For this reason, the ECA has supported the OAU in the creation of the AWCPD to bring women's voices into the mainstream of the continent's agenda for peace and development.

Ms Josephine Ouedraogo, Director of the ACW, spoke on regional development mechanisms with special reference to the ECA and the ADB. She said these decision-making systems operate at a continental level; they cannot be a substitute for the role of the State but serve as an early warning system for States. Thus the OAU's mechanisms warn of impending problems and stimulate the public discussion of continent-wide and sub-regional concerns. Its first declaration on AIDS in 1992 and subsequent meetings on the subject should have given leaders the impetus to address the issue in their Member States.

The Beijing and Dakar Platforms for Action

and the recently adopted Plan of Action all focus on the problems caused by HIV/AIDS and propose strategies to combat the pandemic. These platforms consider, among other things, the measures that must be taken to bring AIDS in Africa under control. She declared: "The political decision-makers have made a commitment:

- to take the lead in the struggle against AIDS by increasing the required resources and creating an appropriate political and juridical environment;
- to give HIV/AIDS priority in all development programmes at the regional, national and local levels;
- to support all policies and programmes aimed at stimulating awareness about the impact of AIDS and which will result in behavioural change;
- to encourage dialogue at all levels on questions relating to AIDS, so as to create a favourable environment for all people infected with AIDS.

"These political commitments to the battle against AIDS that have been accorded at the regional level would be ineffective if the matching activities of awareness-raising are not undertaken in a systematic manner and maintained through regular reminders, follow-up actions and advocacy by the civil society with a view to obtaining their effective implementation."

The ECA has an official mandate to set up programmes to assist and promote women's issues with the eventual aim of eradicating discrimination against women. The ACW is required to arrange regional conferences on women every five years.

Mrs Ouedraogo said there are some problems with the implementation of the Beijing Platform, because Member States do not relate information back to constituencies and stakeholders, and this weakens the regional and continental mechanisms. The ECA has tried to

remedy this by bringing in women representatives, but with limited success. She suggested that the solutions lie in parliamentarians keeping their ministers accountable, and in civil society in turn informing the wider public of decisions taken and keeping their representatives accountable.

The strategy to fight AIDS was to have the ministers of health meet and adopt a plan of action; then in every ministry there should be an appointed focal point to deal with HIV/AIDS and a focal point to deal with NGOs in each country. The ECA will address itself to both of these focal points.

The AWC concentrates its efforts in five areas:

- to enhance women's contribution to economic and social development;
- to develop statistics which reflect women's contribution to the economy;
- to take account of the contributions that women make through domestic and caregiver responsibilities;
- the need to take account of the effect that AIDS has on national economies;
- the setting up of accountability mechanisms.

African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)

Ms Julienne Ondziel, Special Rapporteur on Women's Rights of the ACHPR, explained how this commission functions as a human rights mechanism mandated to interpret the rights and freedoms set forth in the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights. This body offered women a platform to denounce impunity and promote human rights. She explained that at the ACHPR there is an ongoing effort to adopt the additional protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights relating to women's human rights. She also referred to the Geneva Conventions and the protection they offer to women and children during armed conflict. All African countries have ratified these conventions, she said, and the duty was incumbent on all advocacy workers to ensure that they are adhered to.

The 11-member Commission now includes four women. One of these is the Special Rapporteur on Women's Rights, whose responsibilities include visiting countries to report on

African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)

OAU General Secretariat

Political Affairs Department

Secretariat of the ACHPR

11 Members (Algeria, Tunisia, Gambia, Gabon, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Egypt, Congo Brazzaville, South Africa, Chigovera)
[7 males, 4 females]

Among these members there are several special rapporteurs, including the special rapporteur on women's human rights

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

violations such as rape and acts of violence.

Speaking on how to complement the regional instrument for the protection and promotion of women's human rights, Mrs Shirin Aumeeruddy-Cziffra described the CEDAW Committee, based in New York, which is charged with reporting any breaches of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women. An optional protocol is already in existence and awaits ratification by the Member States. She described this as the most up-to-date instrument concerning the rights of women, and one which should be perceived by advocacy workers in the field as a key part of the international juridical arsenal that exists to safeguard those rights. But it was essential to make sure that the Member States signed and ratified the protocol, otherwise it would remain simply a piece of paper. She also stressed the need to sensitise as many women and women's organisations as possible to obtain those ratifications.

She ended her contribution by stating that all African countries have ratified the CEDAW and that the duty is incumbent on advocacy workers to ensure that it is adhered to. She pointed out that, even though the Committee can itself launch an inquiry into a given situation, it is important for NGOs such as FAS to flex their muscles and show that they understand the mechanism and that they are well aware of what is going on in their country. FAS is particularly well placed to act as a driving belt to keep the committee informed about such issues and thus to ensure that international pressure is maintained.

Of particular interest is that this type of mechanism concerns the individual who, in many countries, may not have recourse to a supreme court or a constitutional court, but will henceforth have recourse to an institutional court.

African Women Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD)

Mrs Hiroute Guebre Selassie, Executive Officer of the AWCPD, informed the gathering that the main objective of the AWCPD is to facilitate and ensure the effective participation of women in peace initiatives in Africa and to promote and support the networking of existing women's peace-building mechanisms to ensure their systematic inclusion in peace negotiation teams. The Committee is also entrusted with responsibility for coordinating and facilitating communication between national, sub-regional and continental women's initiatives targeting peace and development.

The AWCPD strives to bring a women's and a gender perspective into decision-making, by reviewing policies of exclusion, ensuring prevention and redress of violations of women's rights and keeping track of governments' per-

African Women Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD)

Secretary-General
Organization of African Unity (OAU)

Executive Secretary
Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

African Women's Committee on
Peace and Development (AWCPD)
16 Members:
6 governmental,
5 eminent persons and 5 NGOs

- advocates on women's position in peace and development
- monitors and coordinates statistics
- researches and collects data
- disseminates information to women

formance levels. The establishment of the AWCPD resulted directly from the absence of women's participation in decision-making within the OAU and ECA, and should be embraced as a new forum for participation. It serves as an advisory body to the OAU Secretary-General and the ECA Executive Secretary.

At the end of Mrs Guebre Selassie's presentation, a video was shown entitled "A Farewell to Arms: Africa takes the lead in getting guns off the streets and out of the bush." In this documentary, produced by the Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers (NISAT), ex-combatants, aid workers and government officials tell the all-too-familiar story of how the proliferation of small arms and light weapons fuels conflict and blocks development in Africa. The film also presents stories of hope, however, resulting from civil society, church and government initiatives in West Africa, especially those led by ECOWAS, whose Member States have ratified a moratorium on small arms which is supported by the UN through the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED).

Since its creation, the AWCPD has focused on the following areas of concern:

- Building an African women's agenda for peace and networking with African women's peace organisations: the AWCPD co-organised with UNESCO the Pan-African Women's Conference on a Culture for Peace which was held in Zanzibar in May 1999. The Conference enabled the Committee to develop a dialogue and share its vision with several peace organisations and with more than 300 women from all over Africa and to build with them an African Women's Peace Agenda, "The Zanzibar Agenda for Peace".

- Developing a Plan of Action: based on the African Women's Peace Agenda, the AWCPD convened three meetings devoted to the identification of strategic interventions in the field and the formulation of a three-year Plan of Action.
- Bringing women's voices to the peace process: the AWCPD organised the Burundian Women's Peace Meeting in Kampala, Uganda in October 1998 under the leadership of H.E. Dr Wandira Kazibwe, Vice President of Uganda, to support women's participation in the Arusha peace process.
- Advocating for women's involvement in the peace process: the AWCPD participated in OAU meetings to ensure that women's critical concerns figured on the African agenda; this also provided opportunities to advocate for women's involvement in the various ongoing peace processes and to identify the existing obstacles so as to translate commitments made in Beijing into effective programmes of action.
- Networking: the preparatory meetings of Beijing +5 in Addis Ababa and New York provided excellent networking opportunities for the AWCPD to establish contacts with various women's groups and enabled it to gather firsthand information from countries in conflict such as Burundi, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- Fundraising: the AWCPD has developed a fundraising strategy in order to mobilise funds for its Plan of Action. This will help in supporting women's peace initiatives in conflict areas.

Ms Selassie stressed the need for the AWCPD to build partnerships with various women's networks which have expertise and experience in peace and development issues in order to implement its activities effectively.

Building alliances

“I recalled that myself and Mrs Bineta Diop of FAS had on several occasions undertaken risky, sensitive peace missions to areas of conflict such as Burundi, Eritrea and Ethiopia, and consequently FAS and AWA had seen the advantage of alliances and sharing the limited resources and experiences; the two organisations had complemented each other by giving support and encouragement.”

Mrs Gertrude Mongella, President of Advocacy for Women in Africa (AWA)

The success of FAS's advocacy programme is largely due to the alliances that it has been developing with other partners working around the same issue, such as the Perry Centre, ACCORD (South Africa), the Africa Leadership Forum (ALF) and Advocacy for Women in Africa (AWA), in the various activities undertaken in the peace process.

In a message to the Workshop, Mrs Gertrude Mongella, President of AWA, put forward the proposal that a formal working partnership be established between FAS and AWA. In view of the devastating floods in Mozambique, which are undermining all the peace-building efforts in that country, she said: “I propose that FAS and AWA send a joint mission to Mozambique and work together to help the mobilisation of needed aid and resources to the affected people, particularly women and children. I congratulate FAS/UNAIDS for organising the Workshop on Conflict and AIDS. AWA will surely work with you on the advocacy of this important issue.”

Mr Vasu Gounden, Executive Director of ACCORD, who attended part of the Workshop,

reiterated his organisation's willingness to work closely on the issue of supporting civil society in the Burundian peace process.

Ms Bunmi Salako, of ALF, spoke of the Forum and the Index on the Status of Women in Africa, which FAS has participated in creating. She recalled that at the First African Women's Forum held in 1998, Mrs Graça Machel had said: “The women's movement in Africa never set short, medium- or long-term goals. Its motion aims at the ultimate goal, which is ideal. But without a proper planning process, we can hardly establish adequate strategies and methodologies; we will not know how to evaluate progress and failure; we lack indicators of where to strengthen, where to improve, where to correct, where the gaps are.” Ms Salako said that the Index was established to have a concrete way of identifying the areas where significant progress has been made and also the areas that still need work, and today that is ALF's primary project.

In order to tackle the HIV/AIDS issue effectively and to have a greater impact, these alliances need to be strengthened.

Forging partnerships

“The unabated spread of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa and the grave consequences on development have been the impetus for UNAIDS to initiate the new ‘International Partnership against AIDS in Africa’. This innovative partnership has five stakeholders: African governments, the UN, bilateral development agencies, NGOs and the private sector. Each is committed to working in unison to turn around the HIV epidemic in Africa. Today, FAS is joining the partnership.”

Mrs Cyrilla Bwakira, Country Programme Adviser ad interim in Ethiopia for UNAIDS

Greater networking with international, regional and national institutions operating in crisis-hit areas of Africa will be a prime goal for FAS, not least because AIDS is no respecter of national frontiers. Almost invariably, the responsibility for taking the initiative in creating such working arrangements will lie with the membership of FAS in different countries.

Mrs Cyrilla Bwakira, Country Programme Adviser ad interim in Ethiopia for UNAIDS, addressed the Workshop on the vital need for partnership. She said: “Furthermore, in the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, HIV/AIDS has been identified as a priority concern from the health and from the gender equality perspective. In countries experiencing civil conflict and instability, partners have agreed that the UNAIDS Secretariat and co-sponsors will work with other partners to develop before the end of 2000, and subsequently to test, approaches to the prevention of transmission of HIV that might occur as a result of social disruption and conflict, and also to support those infected and affected by HIV regardless of their social or political status.

“The factors that encourage the spread of HIV among victims of armed conflict are complex and numerous, and many of you here have witnessed these in your own

countries:

- The breakdown of health services, especially those for HIV prevention, during civil strife;
- The possibility that children — who have little to occupy them and no one to look after them — may become sexually active earlier than children in normal circumstances;
- The displacement of rural populations to heavily populated areas, which are unfamiliar to them;
- The risk of unscreened blood used for transfusions.

“During this Workshop, we hope you will be able to be concrete in the effort to integrate the issues of AIDS into your mission of peace. We must have a collective voice in saying what we want for our women so that they are protected against HIV:

- culturally appropriate psychosocial support for victims and their families;
- support personnel who are in first contact with women who understand the special trauma of women experiencing conflict;
- health services for women who are victims of sexual violence, including care for sexually transmitted diseases, and for pregnancy;
- collaboration with protection officers, community organisations and religious groups for services and for preventive education.

“Last of all, we need to document the expe-

riences of these women while respecting their privacy. Their stories must be told to decision-makers so that we break the silence that is getting louder by the day; we have to learn from their experience, and build opportunities to prevent these experiences from happening again."

Mrs Bwakira concluded: "Our individual and collective action will be the small heroic

acts that will contribute to the reversal of the course of the epidemic. FAS and UNAIDS are merely creating the space for the leaders you are to join the battle against it. It will not be an organisation battle; it will be your individual battle that will save our children."

The international community should create an enabling environment for women's NGOs to be partners in their programmes.



Reception offered by the Director of the ACW to the participants and their partners (OAU/ECA/UNAIDS).

Data collection

No country is spared this epidemic... AIDS knows no colour, respects no geographical boundaries, respects no age differences and respects no religions. All of us, all of us, are potential victims. It is a disease, a pandemic which has yet to find a cure. It is true that more people are dying of malaria, but at least in the case of malaria, where the quinine can't help, there is something else that can help and at least there is hope. In the case of AIDS, the only hope is prevention.

Dr Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General of the OAU

One of the future key activities of FAS in all the countries where it will be working will be the compilation of data, statistics and anecdotal evidence that may be of value in shaping strategies and guiding preventive action in the three inter-linked fields of women, peace and HIV/AIDS.

At the start of the Workshop, Mrs Cyrilla Bwakira, Country Programme Adviser ad interim in Ethiopia for UNAIDS, offered the participants some chilling statistics:

- AIDS is now the leading killer in sub-Saharan Africa, where 23.3 million people have HIV or AIDS;
- 90% of the world's 11 million AIDS orphans are in Africa;
- In 1998, 200,000 Africans died from war — but 2.2 million died from HIV/AIDS. In Africa's most-affected regions, as many as one person in four is estimated to carry HIV;
- About half of HIV infections occur before the age of 25 and these young men and women typically die of AIDS before 35.

According to Mrs Bwakira, the threat of HIV to women's and girls' lives has become worse, especially in the African setting where women represent 55% of the 23.3 million people living with HIV/AIDS. According to recent studies in several African populations, girls aged 15 to 19 are around five to six times

more likely to be HIV-positive than boys their own age. The infection rate in men eventually catches up but not until after their late 20s or early 30s. Clearly older men — who often coerce girls into sex or buy their favours with sugar-daddy gifts — are the main source of HIV for the teenage girls.

With the rise of HIV infections in the region, the risk for women who live in conditions of conflict increases in multiple ways, and their protection also becomes increasingly a challenge. Women become victims of sexual violence, as rape becomes the ultimate tool of war. The trauma of women and young girls who experience sexual violence during armed conflict has proven to be long-lasting, especially if they acquire HIV and develop AIDS in absolute poverty.

"As we all know," she said, "women are often called upon to assume new roles in periods of armed conflict. Frequently, in addition to their traditional roles, they have to assume full responsibility for the survival of their families, when the men have left to participate in war, or have been killed, or have disappeared. Not only are the women sometimes unprepared for these new functions; the conflict in many contexts aggravates the discrimination they already experience during peacetime."

She stressed the need to continually bring to the attention of decision-makers the special threats to our lives and to our health, and the special needs that must be addressed. "We must let them know the ways that women are affected by armed conflicts and what conditions we need so that our survival is ensured."

Mrs Bwakira further added that FAS had proved successful in making policy-makers aware of the needs of women, and concluded: "You have a voice. There is a new battle that we ask you to be part of. That is, the battle against AIDS. And it is a battle of life and death."

Information sharing

“There are so many things that we are supposed to be doing together. I don’t think there is coherence even in our approaches to these issues. So for me, I think the most important thing that is required is for us to map out who is doing what, where and how. I need to know what FAS is doing. I need to know what Abantu is doing. I need to know what others are doing.”

Mrs Mary Maboreke, Head of the Women and Development Division of the OAU

International NGOs such as FAS have a pressing need to exchange the information they receive at regional and national levels. Without a structured system of information sharing, much potentially useful data can remain in isolation and fail to be applied where they can have a really positive impact. Conflict in one country very often has repercussions on neighbouring States, and this too underlines the need for exchanges of experiences at all levels.

As an example of the kind of information that must be shared, Ms Jacqueline Ruth Bataringaya, HIV/AIDS Coordinator for ActionAID, reported on research carried out by ActionAID Uganda into the linkages between conflict and HIV/AIDS, since the districts in that country relatively spared from the disease were the ones that had not been affected by conflict. First of all, they found there were more women than men affected, and the conflicts negatively changed people’s sexual behaviour. Men raped women with impunity — whether they were soldiers, men within refugee camps or men within the host community. So rape tended to increase across the board; men even raped their wives more frequently and, within the host community, it was less safe for women to walk about. Men also bought sex freely.

Referring to other countries such as

Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Burundi and Rwanda, she said: “Because conflict changed individual attitudes to sex, what people live through changes their attitudes towards sex. Sex is no longer the big thing that you must share with someone and consider sacred, when you are seeing lives being lost so quickly like that. People tend to have more sexual partners, increased incidence of rape and unwanted sexual relationships... And one of the most significant findings was how conflict undermines the stability of the family unit. Families are the custodians of behaviour and then the wider community imposes norms and regulations on sexual behaviour. But once this whole system is disrupted, all the controls are broken... There is more likely to be sexual activity that puts both the men and the women at risk of HIV.”

“And one of the other impacts is the way in which children get affected by this. There is no parental guidance, no role modelling for the children, and also the children are not protected, so some of these children actually become victims of sexual abuse because their mothers are busy either selling sex for money or trying to make a living out of a conflict situation.”

The breakdown in the health services as a result of conflict makes even worse the fact that women are very vulnerable to HIV.

Women's sexual reproductive health is completely ignored and they have no access to treatment for sexually transmitted infections. Ms Bataringaya concluded: "Even post-conflict, sometimes the situation gets worse before it gets better."

Ms Bataringaya's presentation was followed by the screening of a video (produced by ActionAID) entitled "The Struggle for Peace", concerning the conflict situation in northern Uganda and, in particular, its impact on the children. The conflicts, virtually continual since 1986, have been between the Ugandan government and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which aspires to overthrow the government. The struggle is also linked to the conflict in southern Sudan. The people living in the affected areas are caught in the middle and suffer at the hands of both sides.

Ms Bertha Amisi of ActionAID explained that since 1994 the LRA has increasingly used child abduction as a means of recruitment to its ranks; it is estimated that some 10,000 Acholi children have been abducted and forced to fight for the LRA. The children are brutalised and in turn they terrorise. The boys are forced to act as soldiers and sometimes to kill their own relatives and neighbours. The teenage girls are forced into sexual slavery, often ending up with unwanted children and sexually transmitted diseases.

Against this background, the local community, the Acholi people, local NGOs, local parliamentarians and government officials, alongside the Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development and international NGOs, embarked on a series of peace-building initiatives with local communities.

Describing the video, Ms Amisi said that, although there has been some success and progress, the war continues and is closely tied to the situation in Sudan. "No matter how much the people can do in northern Uganda, if nothing is done in southern Sudan to resolve the Sudan question, it will always spill over into northern Uganda. So there is a regional dimension to this conflict," she said.

The Internet is increasingly playing a big role in information sharing, nationally and internationally, and most NGOs are today creating their own Web sites. Information technology in general is catching on throughout the continent; one example is the CD-ROM created by the ACW entitled "Status of Women in Africa," which contains data for the 53 African countries covering three decades up to 1998 in graphs and tables. The data include an overview of the current status of women in such critical areas as health, education, women in politics and decision-making, human rights, and women's contribution to economic development.

FAS has developed some tools to accompany its advocacy strategy, such as a Web site www.fasngo.org which offers information on women's peace activities and makes available a "Leadership Bank" on women leaders working for gender equality, peace and development in Africa. FAS publishes, twice yearly, an advocacy newsletter which reports on and analyses the role of women in peace initiatives and monitors progress in gender, peace, development and related issues. FAS also publishes a series on women's best practices in Africa.

These tools and existing networks and available technology should be better utilised by women in their peace and HIV/AIDS advocacy

Evaluation

“I have found the Workshop to have been extremely rich in input and that it effectively linked the issues of gender, conflict and HIV/AIDS. Extensive analysis had been carried out at this seminar on conflict, the root causes of conflict, the impact of conflict and the impact of HIV/AIDS.”

Ms Margaret Vogt, Assistant to the Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs at the UN

Ms Shaer and Ms Bataringaya chaired a final session, which aimed at getting participants to evaluate the Workshop. Participants were asked to consider the logistical, the content and the process aspects of the week and to comment on these. They were encouraged to be as frank as possible, as their inputs would offer organisers and facilitators a means of improving future gatherings.

In the same context, Ms Margaret Vogt, Assistant to the Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs at the UN, in her closing speech made an evaluation of the discussions at the Workshop and proposed the way forward. She said: “The importance of this seminar lies in the attempt to link the issue of HIV/AIDS to conflict prevention, conflict management, peace building and also to introduce the concept of gender mainstreaming. I think this was effectively done. One of the critical issues that we should always bear in mind is the shared difficulty of defining points of entry. Extensive analysis has been carried out at this seminar on conflict, the root causes of conflict, the impact of conflict and the impact of HIV/AIDS. After all is said and done, what do we do and how do we pitch our interventions? At what stage would our interventions have an impact? A negative impact or a positive impact?”

“Experience shows that it is not always advisable to act without a carefully defined strategy for entry into particular conflict situations. When do you begin to prepare to work on the issue of AIDS? At what stage in the gestation of conflicts? Is it at the beginning of conflicts, as a preventive measure? This would be the ideal, to develop a plan, to develop awareness and to strategise so as to counteract the impact long before a problem becomes a problem, as prevention. But experience shows that this is one of the most difficult periods, to find a point of entry into a problem. When it has not yet fully bloomed, most people reject that a problem really exists, and resist the intrusion of a strategy to deal with such a problem. So what type of strategies do you need at an early stage, as preventive measures, and what role can stakeholders play in the prevention of both AIDS and the prevention of conflicts? I am not going to provide answers, because the strategies are varied and a lot more thought needs to go into them.”

Once a conflict is full blown, she asked, what can we do to mitigate the impact of the problems? What types of strategies can you have, for example, to mitigate the spread of AIDS? What role can NGOs play? What role can the regional organisations play? What role can the United Nations play?

Ms Vogt went on: "Can you introduce the problem of AIDS, when you are trying to terminate the conflict? Is that the appropriate point? What is the appropriate point of entry at that stage? I think that one of the most appropriate points of entry in dealing with the types of issues we have dealt with here is after the conclusion of the peace agreement, when you are now developing strategies for disarmament, demobilisation and community reintegration. Then the role of NGOs, of international actors, in defining the multiplicity of ways that form the way society should be helped to restore and rebuild itself, becomes extremely important. What is the role of NGOs in this situation? Most of the time, for now, the NGO communities have not been extensively involved in the design of peace-building strategies of societies that are trying to emerge from conflict. I think this is one area we really need to focus on. The strategies you design to bring a society out of conflict will determine the success of that society in fully and finally resolving that conflict and ensuring that you do not have a reversion to conflict.

"One of the strategies that the United Nations has defined, and is increasingly using to forge alliances over a question or an issue,

is the design of what they call a strategic framework. A strategic framework, for example, for Sierra Leone, in which within the strategic framework you define several issues and identify several actors. Then you bring the issues and the actors to come together and work on a plan of action to address a specific problem. I recommend that we adopt a strategic framework approach to deal with the issues that we have been talking about extensively today."

FAS believes that it is important to have indicators to measure the achievements of its programmes. These criteria will help in reviewing progress and shortcomings, re-evaluating and defining new strategies for future activities. The tools for such evaluation may include such useful collections of data as the CD-ROM created by the ACW entitled "Status of Women in Africa", mentioned above, as well as documentary films.

Apart from its own evaluation, FAS will also use ALF's Index on the Status of Women called "Towards Improved Leadership for Women's Empowerment in Africa: Measuring Progress and Improving Strategy" — a regular report which is used for the ranking of African countries and governments in this area.

Resource mobilisation

“Africa seeks to urgently confront and eradicate infectious diseases, especially HIV/AIDS – a crisis in Africa of unimaginable proportions that is already reversing the continent’s fragile social gains. The latest report from UNAIDS estimates that Africa will need US\$1.6 billion to \$2.6 billion a year just to contain the disease – not to mention the cost of treating 23 million Africans already dying from it.”

Dr K. Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

As Africa will need such enormous resources to tackle the problem of HIV/AIDS, any advocacy programme should focus on resource mobilisation, especially regarding the issue of debt relief, to enable investment in research towards a vaccine, in the treatment of infected persons and in HIV prevention. Resources mobilised should be directed not only to government programmes but also to civil society and projects designed for vulnerable groups.

In his closing address to the Workshop, Dr Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General of the OAU, told the delegates: “We have supported FAS from the very beginning. It is not a selfless support — we are very selfish in doing that. We do so because we believe the strength of the OAU, its effectiveness in reaching ordinary Africans, lies in how the civil society is organised and how the civil society can deliver the goods.”

Efforts were being made to organise a meeting that will bring together African NGOs and the OAU in a serious discourse, with the objective of sharing responsibilities and apportioning roles. He went on: “There are things we can do, there are things you can do, but altogether we all have the common objective. In that context, you will find me supporting you, myself, as the Secretary-General, and the Organisation as a whole. We

believe very strongly and very firmly that we need to interact more and more with the civil society for the objectives of the OAU and the objectives of our leaders to be understood.”

Mr Sam Ibok, Director of the Political Department of the OAU, advised the participants at the Workshop: “If you have a programme, if you have people you are working with in the area of HIV/AIDS, we will work with you in that area, we will provide funding for you in that area.”

Mr Moussa Makan Camara, Permanent Representative of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie with the OAU and ECA, emphasised that his organisation has long wanted to broaden the dimensions of its approach to community solidarity and in particular to see greater involvement of women in the peaceful resolution of conflicts. At the same time it planned to initiate and support projects and programmes aimed at prevention, sensitisation and preservation of physical and psychological health, particularly that of women, in the context of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS.

In a society in which, rightly or wrongly, inventiveness, decision-making and action-taking have been and unfortunately continue to be largely the province of one-half of humanity, the feminine initiative has great potential for a more productive future. His organisation

was therefore in full agreement with the idea of establishing a correlation between conflict and AIDS. Pledging full support to the new initiative of FAS, he quoted the views of a Francophone poet — “that as long as women remain in the antechamber of power and of decision-making, humanity will have used only half its imagination potential, will have taken only half of its decisions and will have performed only half of what it could do.”

Mr Camara said FAS could be assured of the

firm and energetic support of his Organisation’s Secretary-General and of its operators with a view to reaching a common dimension and a common approach to the problems in hand — a key aspect of both institutions’ cooperative action.

Advocacy work should also focus on debt cancellation through the Bretton Woods institutions to enable more investment to be made in the effort to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Conclusion

“Let me express FAS’s deep appreciation to UNAIDS, our partner in this Workshop. Their efforts to build strong partnerships with regional bodies, NGOs and women’s organisations to combat HIV in Africa have to be recognised. Let me also say that without the support of UNAIDS, the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, OAU and ECA, this Workshop could not have taken place.”

H.E. Ruth Sando Perry, former Head of State of Liberia and member of the FAS Advisory Board

In her closing remarks at the Workshop, Ms Thandi Orleyn, Member of the FAS Board, said the commitment of FAS to the linkage between AIDS and gender and peace advocacy had been reaffirmed in terms of developing and strengthening women’s leadership in the peace processes in our continent. “We have also reaffirmed our commitment to using advocacy processes to bring about peace, and to have women as champions of the advocacy work that we see in front of us.”

Ms Orleyn went on: “The Workshop has also confirmed to us the need to integrate the work that we have been doing and the vision that we have in ways of combating AIDS in our continent. We believe that FAS’s vision is shining brighter than ever, and that we can identify where we are going to be more effective in terms of this vision.”

Ms Orleyn concluded that “in line with our approach to partnership, and in line with our support for the African Women Committee on Peace and Development, we believe that FAS should support that structure with a view to consolidating the gains of earlier advocacy efforts and ensuring a sustainable empowerment of women.”

Follow-up

- The FAS biannual newsletter, *Advocacy News*, featured an article, “War on

HIV/AIDS”. This article examined the connection between HIV/AIDS, women in conflict situations, and conflict resolution in Africa. The article included sections addressing “Women and HIV/AIDS”, “Conflict and HIV/AIDS”, “Society and HIV/AIDS” and “Breaking the Silence”. A reference was also made to the upcoming conference examining these issues. This publication has so far been distributed to over 1,500 organisations and individuals.

- The communiqué issued at the workshop was distributed widely to the media, UN agencies and various representatives to the UN in Geneva.
- Immediately following the conference, at the UN Commission on Human Rights in April 2000, Mrs Bineta Diop gave an address on behalf of FAS bringing the Commission’s attention to the connection between issues of gender, HIV/AIDS, and peace and conflict resolution. Mrs Diop spoke of the alarming rates of HIV infection in Africa, the increased vulnerability to the virus that women face, and the connection between the prevalence of violent conflicts in many African countries, the lack of understanding of HIV/AIDS, sexual violence against women during these situations, and the problem of social norms and gender inequality in many societies. Mrs Diop made an appeal to the Commission to inten-

sify efforts to connect gender, HIV and the promotion of women's rights in Africa.

- The link between HIV/AIDS, conflict and women was brought up at the Mano River Conference in Abuja, Nigeria, in May, during a group work session in which the participants were to diagnose critical areas of concern relating to conflict. HIV/AIDS in conflict situations was brought to the fore when participants testified that the physical abuse and rape of women in Liberia and Sierra Leone has facilitated the spread of the virus across the region. It was agreed that more resources needed to be put towards fighting the virus and also towards HIV/AIDS education and the social and economic empowerment of women. The expectation that humanitarian organisations along with governments must work to help in the reintegration and resettlement of refugees was expressed. The strategies and recommendations developed by the working groups were then incorporated into a global Plan of Action. A FAS training programme linking gender and HIV is part of this Plan of Action.

- At a conference organised by FAS in May 2000 in Geneva, Switzerland, entitled "Africa: Investing in Our Future", during a discussion, UNAIDS representative Noelene Kaleeba brought up the question of how and if the

programme was prepared to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic. She said that addressing the issue of women in conflict was a definite priority for UNAIDS and added that FAS has been a key contributor in linking and mainstreaming the issues of women in conflict with development issues. The purpose of the Geneva meeting was to begin a process targeting women's small and medium enterprises in post-crisis countries and facilitating their access to investment credit so that they may participate in the renewal of economic activity and create the building blocks for lasting peace and stability in their countries.

- During the OAU summit in Lomé, Togo, FAS conducted consultations with the Special Rapporteur on Women's Human Rights, Julienne Ondziel, who attended the Workshop in Addis Ababa. Plans have been laid to include the issue of HIV in a joint programme to be implemented in 2000–2001.
- FAS has also received some feedback from its members since the Addis Ababa meeting. This included the advocacy campaigns they have conducted through radio programmes, sensitisation of local women's groups, and training in gender and HIV.
- The training manual which FAS is developing will support the advocacy work of women's NGOs on HIV/AIDS at various levels.

FAS advocacy on peace and gender

The main objective of the FAS advocacy programme is to promote awareness of local, regional and international decision-making on the centrality of women's concerns regarding public policy planning and implementation in the field of peace, security and stability for the development of the African continent.

This has been achieved by:

- mobilising local women's NGOs involved in the peace process and encouraging their networking, and facilitating these groups to establish strong partnerships with peace and development bodies at all levels;
- supporting women's NGOs attending the sessions of the governing bodies of AWCPD, OAU, ECA, ADB and ACHPR to better understand the proceedings of those different bodies, raising awareness of their mechanisms and functions and translating them to the grassroots level;
- facilitating the creation of a women's caucus within these institutions which will serve as a platform for local NGOs to meet regularly to exchange information, hold briefings and formulate their agenda to be presented through these mechanisms;
- strengthening women's organisations within the caucus by providing them with the necessary advocacy techniques and tools, and making use of press releases and daily meetings to mobilise public and political support;
- advocating and sensitising these institutions on the role of women in peace and development, and stressing the importance for African States to ratify and implement legal instruments addressing women's human

rights;

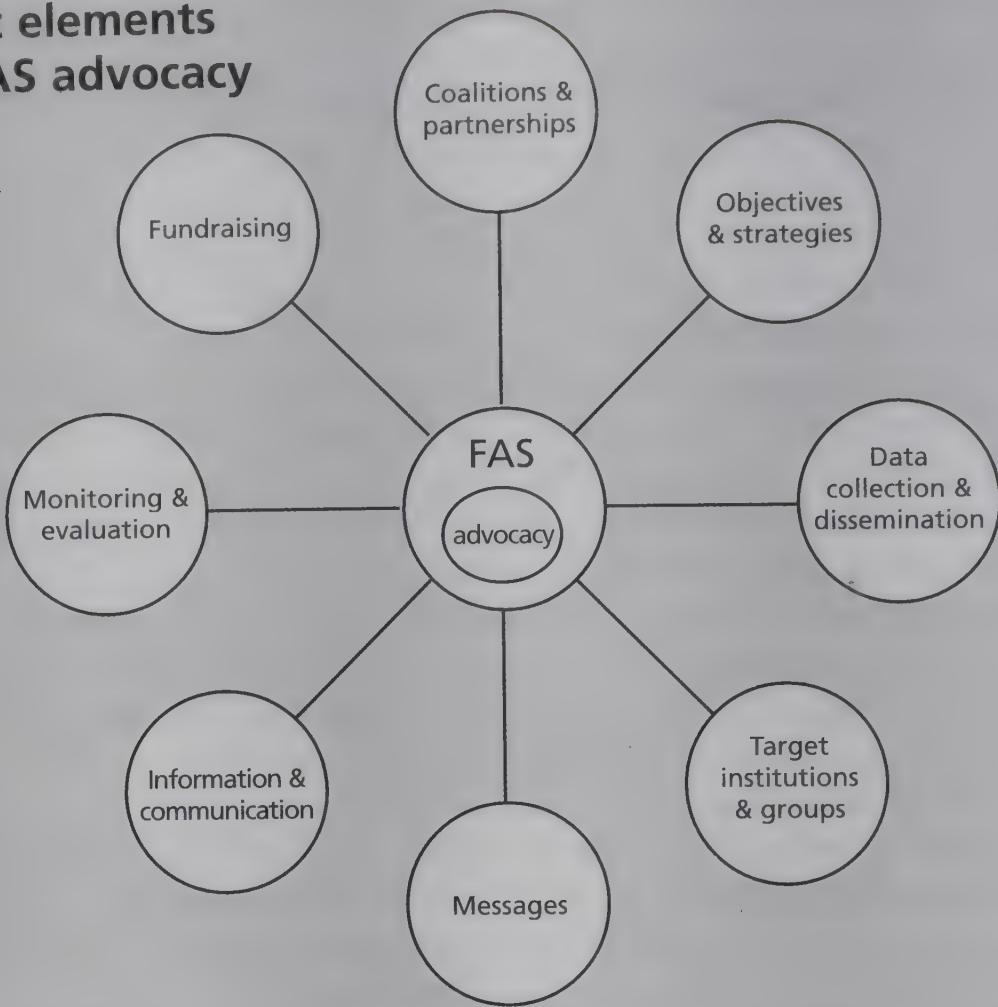
- monitoring and evaluating the progress made towards the implementation of the various Platforms of Action addressing the empowerment of women adopted by African States;
- organising campaigns through the media and sensitising the public on the role of women and their NGOs' best practices in the peace process;
- building partnerships with women from other continents to support these campaigns;
- collecting data, statistics and evidence of women's best practices and disseminating this information;
- fundraising activities to mobilise resources to support women's initiatives on conflict resolution and peace building.

What did we achieve?

1. Advocacy campaign: Engendering the peace process

FAS has lobbied for and obtained institutional change in international, regional and national bodies. It participated in the campaign organised by the African women's peace movement which led to the creation of the African Women Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD) in April 1998 to ensure women's participation in the activities of the OAU's central organ, in particular through the Mechanism of Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. It is meant to work in close co-operation with the OAU's Women's Unit and the ECA's African Centre for Women. FAS is doing similar work

Basic elements of FAS advocacy



at the sub-regional level, for example in the ECOWAS peace mechanism, by using the Mano River Union as an entry point. To bring women's voices and concerns to the ongoing peace process in Burundi, FAS also successfully advocated for the participation of Burundian women at the peace negotiations which are currently being held in Arusha, at which they were granted observer status.

2. Violence against women

FAS has participated in the elaboration of legal instruments to protect women's human rights. In this regard, FAS has supported women's participation at the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York, which is in charge of drafting the optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women

(CEDAW). Also at the regional level, FAS has successfully campaigned for the appointment of a Special Rapporteur for women's rights at the ACHPR; this was accomplished in April 1998. It also successfully lobbied for the inclusion of more women members in the Commission, which has brought the number of women from two to four during the OAU Summit in June 1999 in Algiers; and also the elaboration of an additional protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights for the establishment of an African Court of Human Rights, which is pending ratification at the OAU level, as well as an additional protocol on Women's Human Rights.

FAS has also intervened at the UN Commission on Human Rights and at its Sub-commission regarding the situation of women in armed conflict, especially in Sierra

Leone. This was during the 1998, 1999 and 2000 sessions. These interventions led to the visit of the High Commissioner on Human Rights to Sierra Leone and the setting up of a tribunal to look into the crimes perpetrated during the conflict.

3. Solidarity and peace missions

FAS sent several high-level delegations to visit Burundi in December 1997, Sierra Leone in February 1997, Liberia in July 1997 and Ethiopia and Eritrea in September 1999. The missions were aimed at encouraging and supporting women's peace initiatives in those countries; sensitising the different actors involved in the negotiations on the need to involve women in the decision-making process on peace; and sharing experiences on African women's initiatives on conflict management and resolution.

4. Capacity Building

FAS has organised training workshops and fostered an exchange of experience and information among women and their associations in numerous parts of Africa, especially in Burundi in December 1997, two training sessions in Liberia in July 1997, in Sierra Leone in February 1997 and in the Great Lakes region in March 1998. Such training workshops focused on civic education, conflict resolution and negotiation techniques, as well as leadership building. FAS has also built national women's networks in the Great Lakes and Mano River regions, through the creation of sub-regional networks such as Femmes et Paix and the Mano River Women's Peace Network.

5. Democratisation process

FAS has successfully conducted women-only election observer missions to Liberia in 1997,

designed to assist the electoral process as a whole. This mission was carried out in four phases. The first phase was a solidarity mission, as well as a training programme on civic education to support the women; this was followed by an election observer mission; the third phase was an evaluation programme which was combined with training on advocacy and techniques of negotiation; and the final phase centred on the promotion of gender issues into government policies and programmes.

6. Communication

FAS promotes communication, with a view to maintaining contacts between women and the international community and building partnerships. To this end, FAS has developed a Web site www.fasngo.org which offers information on women's peace activities and makes available a "Leadership Bank" on women leaders working for gender equality, peace and development in Africa. FAS also publishes, twice yearly, an advocacy newsletter, *FAS Advocacy News*, which reports on and analyses the role of women in peace initiatives and monitors progress in gender, peace, development and related issues. The various missions of FAS are also published in the form of books. During its previous programme, FAS published four mission reports. The first one addressed the democratic process in Liberia and the second one was devoted to Women's Best Practices in the Sierra Leone peace process; the third and fourth ones were on Women's Best Practices in Burundi and the Mano River Union States of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. These publications have been widely distributed for information purposes to women's NGOs, governments and OAU Member States.



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Advocacy messages and strategies

The following guidelines were provided to the working group participants at the Addis Ababa workshop to help them develop appropriate messages and strategies.

ADVOCACY MESSAGE

- Problem clearly defined
 - Preventing HIV/AIDS spread
 - Managing/treating affected population
- Solution to problem

FRAMING MESSAGE FOR TARGET(S)

- demonstrate that the problem is a priority and needs immediate attention
- demonstrate that **ALL** will benefit when problem is addressed

TARGET(S) WHO + WHERE ARE THEY?

- Levels: macro, meso, micro
- Understand your target. Do you know them?
 - interest; fears; power they have
 - obstacles to overcome in getting target to listen or give you audience

MESSAGE DELIVERY

- How do you communicate your message?
- How do you mobilise networks, partnerships collaboration?
- What “tools” are appropriate?

TIMING OF MESSAGE DELIVERY

- When? Not too late!!
- Seize opportunities

THE MESSENGER

- Who will deliver the message?
- How prepared are they?
- How are they recognised?

KNOW WHERE YOU ARE.

KNOW WHERE YOU WANT TO GO.

KNOW HOW TO GET THERE.

Issues and opportunities

Participants in the Addis Ababa workshop identified the following issues and opportunities:

Opportunities

1. Networking and strategic partnerships;
2. Comparative advantage of OAU, continental positions, complementary to subregional organisations, leadership;
3. OAU able to mobilise resources for specific projects linked to HIV/AIDS;
4. Integration of HIV/AIDS in post-conflict reconstruction efforts;
5. Capacity building and mainstreaming gender and AIDS;
6. Holding governments accountable - setting up accounting systems;
7. Linkages between international and regional mechanisms;
8. Stronger recognition of role of civil society at regional level - as stakeholders;
9. Set/establish pressure groups in country;
10. Specific opportunity of African Women Committee for Peace and Development.

Issues/limitations

Where there is lack of political will:

- How to address feelings/threats to the people;
- Unconstitutional actions, violation of human rights vs. sovereignty;
- Resources;
- Translation of resolutions, decisions and recommendations into action and impact on the affected populations/on the ground;
- Lack of information and engagement;
- Lack of follow-up on decisions and resolutions;
- Re-inventing the wheel;
- Sharing experiences;
- Review progress, monitor outcome;
- What punitive measures can be put in place, who to apply the measures and under what circumstances;
- Dependency/victim inevitability - assertive messages.

Agenda of Addis Ababa Workshop

2-7 April 2000

Date	9:00 – 11:00	11:30 – 13:00	14:30 – 16:00	16:30 – 18:00
Day one: Monday, 3 April	Registration Opening ceremony - FAS - UNAIDS - OAU - ECA	Overview of the Workshop Review of the FAS Peace Advocacy Programme	Women in Peace Negotiations at the National Level: National Experiences	Continuation
Day two: Tuesday, 4 April	Gender Issues of AIDS in Conflict Settings and in Peace Resolution	Opportunities to Address Gender and AIDS with National Mechanisms (working groups)	FAS presentations Advocacy Messages For Gender and AIDS in National Mechanisms (working groups)	Continuation
Day three: Wednesday, 5 April	Regional and Sub-regional Peace Mechanisms of the OAU	Regional Development Mechanisms of the ECA	Opportunities for Advocacy for Gender and AIDS in Regional Mechanisms working groups	Advocacy Strategies and Messages for Regional Mechanisms working groups
Day four: Thursday, 6 April	Legal Instruments for Women: ACHPR Women Peace Mechanisms: AWCPD	Protocols and Conventions on Peace and Development: OAU	Entry Points for Gender and AIDS in Peace and Development Instruments working groups	Advocacy Strategies and Messages
Day five: Friday, 7 April	Commitments on National Level Actions	Overview: Advocacy Manual on Gender, AIDS, and Peace Advocacy	The Way Forward for FAS	Closing Ceremony

List of participants of Addis Ababa Workshop

2-7 April 2000

Mrs G. Oyebola ADETULA
International Expert on Drug Control
OAU
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Ms Chidubem AKINYEDE
Africa Leadership Forum (ALF)
Obasanjo Farms
Ota, NIGERIA

Ms Rika AMANO
Associate External Relations Officer
UNHCR, Regional Director's Office
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Ms Bertha AMISI
Regional Policy Analyst (Conflict &
Humanitarian Issues)
Actionaid Africa Region - Emergency
Support Centre for Africa
Nairobi, KENYA

Mrs Janet AMOO
Research Associate
OAU
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Mrs Meaza ASHENAFI
Executive Directress, Member of AWCPD
Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Mme Shirin AUMEERUDDY-CZIFFRA
Avocat - Former Attorney-General
Former President of the Conseil
Permanent de la Francophonie
Rosehill, MAURITIUS

M Babacar BA
Premier Conseiller
Ambassade du Sénégal en Ethiopie
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Mme Brigitte BALIPOU-GUINO
Magistrate
Coordinatrice, Réseau Centrafricain sur
l'Ethique, le Droit et le VIH/SIDA
Bangui, RCA

Mrs Marie-Louise BARICAKO
Former Head of Department
University of Burundi
Banjul, GAMBIA

Dr Jacqueline Ruth BATARINGAYA
HIV/AIDS Coordinator
Actionaid Africa Region
Harare, ZIMBABWE

Mrs Cyrilla BWAKIRA
Country Programme Adviser a.i.
UNAIDS
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Ambassador Moussa Makan CAMARA
Répresentant Permanent
Organisation Internationale de la
Francophonie
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Mme Ramata Tambadou CAMARA
Jurist
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Dr Marjorie Edith CHAPONDA
Deputy Regional Director
UNHCR
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Ms Adwoa COLEMAN
Chief of Section
OAU
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

M M. CONDE
Director
UNESCO Office
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Mrs Vidya DIAITE
Interprète de Conférence
Association Internationale des Interprètes de
Conférence
Dakar, SENEGAL

Mrs Bineta DIOP
Executive Director/Secretary of AWCPD
Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS)
Geneva, SWITZERLAND

Mrs Aisha Hagi ELMI
Chair Lady, Member of AWCPD
Save Somali Women Children (SSWC)
Nairobi, KENYA

Ms Meron GENENE
Gender and Networking Officer
Inter Africa Group
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Ms Christiana GEORGE
Femmes Africa Solidarité, (FAS)
Geneva, SWITZERLAND

Mme Marie-France GOFFRI
Avocat
Abidjan, COTE d'IVOIRE

Mrs Yvonne GOMA
Chairperson
Zambia Federation of Associations of Women
in Business (ZFAWIB)
Lusaka, ZAMBIA

Mr Vasu GOUNDEN
Director
African Centre for the Constructive
Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)
Durban, SOUTH AFRICA

Mrs Hiroute GUEBRE SELASSIE
Executive Officer a.i.
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Mme Spès HAKIZIMANA
Représentant Légal
Réseau Femmes et Paix
Bujumbura, BURUNDI

Mr Sam Ibok
Director of Political Department
OAU
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Professor C.A. JOHNSON
Director/ESCAS
OAU
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Ms Merlin S. KAGONEGONE
Secretary, Women's Representative
Embassy of the Republic of Malawi
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Ms Grace KALIMUGOGO
Physician
OAU
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Mrs Salimatu Tiangay KHAN
Resource Mobiliser
UNOPS
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Mme Kafui KPEGBA-DZOTSI
Enseignante
Université du Bénin
Lomé, TOGO

Mrs Rosetta E. LAWRENCE
President
Women United for Progress and Democracy
(WOU PAD)
Monrovia, LIBERIA

Dr Mary MABOREKE
Chief, Women's Unit
OAU
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Ms Abdellatif MAHY
Consultant on Women and Gender Issues
OAU
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Ms Mekia MOHAMMED
Women's Affairs Office
Prime Minister's Office
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Mrs Monique MUJAWAMARIYA HACHEY
Consultante
Quebec, CANADA

Mme Julianne ONDZIEL-GNELENGA
Vice-Présidente, Rapporteur spéciale sur les
Droits de la Femme
Commission Africaine des Droits de
l'Homme et des Peuples (CADHP)
Lomé, TOGO

Mrs Thandi ORLEYN
National Director
Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and
Arbitration (CCMA)
Johannesburg, SOUTH AFRICA

Mme Joséphine G. OUEDRAOGO
Director
African Centre for Women
UNECA
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Ms Janet PAZ-CASTILLO
Program Officer
USAID
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Mme Francisca PEREIRA
Consultante sur la culture de paix et droit
de la femme et l'enfant
Conakry, GUINEA

H.E. Mrs Ruth Sando PERRY
Former Head of State of the Republic of
Liberia
President of the Perry Center, FAS
Monrovia, LIBERIA

Mme Marthe SEBERA
Jurist
Pro-Femme Tewse Hamwe
Kigali, RWANDA

Mme Charlotte Helène SOW-CISSE
Présidente
Association Sénégalaise de Protection
et de Promotion des Droits et
Développement de la Femme
Diourbel, SENEGAL

Mrs Esi SUTHERLAND-ADDY
Research Fellow
Institute of African Studies
University of Ghana
Accra, GHANA

Mrs Yetunde TERIBA
Women's Affairs Officer
Organization of African Unity (OAU)
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Mme Joséphine TURPIN SARR
Interprète de Conférence
Association Internationale des Interprètes
de Conférence
Dakar, SENEGAL

Mrs Grace Olubunmi SALAKO
Gender Development Program Officer
Africa Leadership Forum (ALF)
Obasanjo Farms
Ota, NIGERIA

M Kloutan Abdoul Karim SAMATE
Attaché de presse
Ambassade de Burkina Faso à Addis Abeba
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Ms Meera SETHI
Representative
International Organisation for Migration
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Mrs Marion SHAER
Facilitator for FAS
Johannesburg, SOUTH AFRICA

Mrs Margaret Aderinsola VOGT
Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary-
General for Political Affairs
United Nations Secretariat
Department of Political Affairs
New York, USA

List of frequently used acronyms

ACHPR: African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

ADB: African Development Bank

AIDS: Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome

AWC: African Women Centre

AWCPD: African Women Committee on Peace and Development

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women

ECA: Economic Commission for Africa

ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States

FAS: Femmes Africa Solidarité

FAWE: Forum for African Women Educationalists

HIV: Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus

IGAD: Inter-Governmental Authority on Development

OAU: Organization of African Unity

PCASED: Programme for Co-ordination and Assistance for Security and Development

SADC: Southern Africa Development Community

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNAIDS : Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS



Members of the FAS Executive Board at their meeting in Addis Ababa, 1 April 2000

FAS structure

FAS is composed of Members and Associate Members of NGOs from 35 African countries. It has an Executive Board of seven members, an Advisory Board composed of five people and a Secretariat. Its Members meet at a General Assembly every two years in a plenary session where its Board Members are nominated and its general policy and activities are defined.

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board is composed of eminent personalities who have contributed to the promotion of peace in Africa. The current members are:

Mrs Graça Simbine Machel (Mozambique), President of the Foundation for Community Development

Mrs Lisbet Palme (Sweden), Member, United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child

Mrs Ruth Sando Perry (Liberia), former Acting Head of State of Liberia

Ambassador Mohammed Sahnoun (Algeria), Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Africa, United Nations

President Amadou Toumani Touré (Mali), Former Head of State of Mali and President of the "Fondation pour l'Enfance"

Executive Board

The Executive Board is composed of seven African women from different backgrounds, all of whom work on a volunteer basis. They remain in contact with the Secretariat while living and working in Africa, and conduct FAS activities throughout the continent. The current Board Members are as follows:

Mrs Shirin Aumeeruddy-Cziffra (Mauritius), Former Minister of Women's Rights and the Family, and former President of the Conseil Permanent de la Francophonie

Mrs Marie-Louise Baricako (Burundi), former Head of Department at the University of Burundi

Mrs Julienne Ondziel (Congo), Member of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) Special Rapporteur on Women's Rights

Mrs Thandi Orleyn (South Africa) National Director of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA)

Mrs Yasmine Yusu-Sheriff (Sierra Leone), Member of Women Organised for a Morally Enlightened Nation (WOMEN)

Mrs Esi Sutherland-Addy (Ghana), Research Fellow at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana

Mrs Bineta Diop (Senegal), Executive Director of Femmes Africa Solidarité and Secretary of the African Women Committee for Peace and Development (AWCPD)

Secretariat

The Secretariat, based in Geneva, Switzerland, coordinates programmes in Africa and serves as a contact point for international organisations, NGOs and donor agencies. The Executive Director, Mrs Bineta Diop, is in charge of implementing the programme of activities as well as the general management of the Secretariat.

Funding

FAS has received funding from the following main donors:

- the Ministry for Development Cooperation of the Netherlands
- the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
- the Peace Fund of the Organization of African Unity
- the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- the United Nations Office in Burundi (UNOB)
- the Canadian Agency for International Development (CIDA)
- the Ford Foundation (USA)
- the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (UK)
- the Government of Finland
- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)
- Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
- Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)

FAS's accounts are externally audited every year, and a report is circulated to members and to donors.



**FEMMES AFRICA
SOLIDARITÉ (FAS)**
8 rue du Vieux-Billard
P.O. Box 5037
CH-1211 Geneva 11
Switzerland
Tel: + 41 22 328 80 50
Fax: + 41 22 328 80 52
E-mail: info@fasngo.org
Web site: www.fasngo.org